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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE MYTHIC EXTENSIONS OF MAN IN CULTURE PROCESS

by

HEATHER DENISE HARDEN BOTTING

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1976

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Mythic Extensions of Man in Culture Process" submitted by Heather Denise Harden Botting in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

.....
Supervisor

David E. Young

November, 1975

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the concept of myth as an operational definition of the ordering principles of culture. Traditional uses of the term myth are reviewed as well as those of contemporary definitions which indicate a broader appreciation in modern scholastic circles of myth as a dynamic element of culture. In order to "operationalize" myth, consideration is given to a spectrum of its component parts as well as to the basic psychological and intellectual concerns of man expressed in mythopoeic forms. The historical, immediate and future-oriented themes of the mythic vision are considered as channels of action through which the will is expressed.

Myth is the most highly symbolic expression of human ontological concerns. As such, it is the embodiment of all extant human knowledge and of potential perceived by a given society. Myth develops as the ontological extension of individual Being as it strives to realize both the need for expression of the unity of the cosmos as well as of the diversification of man. From this process grows all human knowledge. When this knowledge becomes crystallized and systematized into specific categories which delimit spheres of

behaviour it constitutes human ideologies and dogmas as expressed through such social institutions as churches and political parties. Social action within such specific cultural institutions strives to achieve the "good society" as defined in that aspect of myth which hypothesizes new intellectual and social modalities, and it is this aspect of myth which gives vent to the human will as it drives the forces of social change.

Individual struggling within the social framework constitutes the process of self-affirmation -- the growing to understand what it means to be human. In short, the most fundamental force in culture is the optimism for liberation in the mythic vision of the "good society" created in the consciousness of individuals for translation into concrete reality through the use of social mechanisms.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ever since myth has been conceived as a category of human enterprize, it has been endowed with more meanings than any other human construct. It has been taken to mean stories about gods, pseudo-science, primitive superstition, culture history including the origins of tribes and nations, and in contemporary context it has even been used to describe political ideologies with an implicit prejorative connotation. There has also been a persistent conviction in contemporary scholarship which holds that the "primitive" mind alone is mythopoeic, hence differing qualitatively from the mind of "civilized" man. Myth in this context is reduced to a "rudimentary form of thought" replete with connotations of "primeval stupidity".

However, attitudes toward the form of thought expressed in myth are changing in scholastic circles. There is now a clear indication that the long held conviction of the "rationalist" paradigm of North American society -- that logic and applied science are able to answer all questions confronting man -- is being called into doubt. Serious consideration is being given to a search for a paradigm

for the categorization of human knowledge which transcends the strictures, not of "science" as a discipline, but of "scientific rationalism" as a philosophy of life which has played a major role in the development of modern western culture. In the search for a new ordering principle for society, we are just becoming aware of the fact that scientific rationalism is in itself part of a mythic paradigm. This realization comes with the historical process of demythologization described by Paul Ricoeur in The Symbolism of Evil:

> Precisely because we are living and thinking after the separation of myth and history the demythization [sic] of our history can become the other side of an understanding of myth as myth, and the conquest for the first time in the history of culture, of the mythical dimension. That is why we never speak here of the demythization but strictly of demythologization, it being well understood that what is lost is the false logos of the myth, such as we find expressed, for example, in the etiological function of myths. But when we lose the myth as immediate logos, we rediscover it as myth. Only at the price and by the roundabout way of philosophical exegesis and understanding, can the myth create a new peripeteia of the logos (Ricoeur 1967: 162).

The implications of contemporary man having intellectually distinguished between myth and history as categories of human knowledge are profound. Traditionally man has only distinguished between his own "truth" and the "myths" of others. This was evident in the European Renaissance when

philosophers gazed upon the mythic visions of golden eras long past as models for creating a new European society. The Renaissance attitude has persisted into this century with visionaries looking to the resurrection of antiquarian myths as a universal panacea which will cure all modern ills and lead to the ultimate salvation of mankind (Rahv 1949: 4).. The result of infatuation with myth in this manner was expounded by Philip Rahv as he echoed the words of Ernst Cassirer:

> . . . The romantic philosophers and poets in Germany were the first to embrace myth with rapture identifying it with reality in the same way as the identified poetry with truth: from then on "they saw all things in a new shape. They could not return to the common world - the world of profanum vulgus". The cultism of myth is patently a revival of romantic longings and attitudes (Rahv 1949: 6).

Implicit in this view is the concept of the past as normal and the present as abnormal, an intellectual attitude which inheres whether one looks to the past for a mythic vision of hope or the restitution of a fading tradition in historical context. Yet in spite of the affinity between a mythic vision of the past and tradition, much of the infatuation with myth has stemmed from its apparent opposition to history. The perceived antinomy between myth and history arises from the awareness of the timeless quality of myth inherent because it merges the past and present with visions

of future goals. The disparate temporal concerns exhibited in mythology and in history as isolated conceptual constructs arises in part from the god-centered or "immortal" aspect of mythic entities and the man-centered or "mortal" aspect in history. Viewed from this perspective,

> The mythic is the polar opposite of what we mean by the historical, which stands for process, inexorable change, incessant permutation and innovation. Myth is reassuring in its stability, whereas history is that powerhouse of change which destroys custom and tradition in producing the future -- the future that at the present, with the fading away of the optimism of progress, we may have learned to associate with the danger and menace of the unknown. In our time the movement of history has been so rapid that the mind longs for nothing so much as something permanent to steady it. Hence what the craze for myth represents most of all is the fear of history (Rahv 1949: 6-7).

But the importance of history in respect to myth cannot be dismissed so lightly bocause the search for stability in the revival of old mythic modalities while trying to discount one's own history amounts to nothing more than a "cult of mythology". In essence there is never a valid choice between a moribund and irretrievable past and a dynamic, irresistible future (Mumford 1970: 159). In this vein, Lewis Mumford argued that any philosophy of human history must take into account that the selective process in nature has reached its most extreme expression in man. Hence any mechanical or institutional form of organizing

human activity which tries to limit the possibilities of continued trial, selection, emergence and transcendence within the context of a closed and completely unified system can serve only to arrest human cultural evolution. And history can teach no lessons in a society which strives to eliminate or deny history from its basic premises (Mumford 1970: 159). History, then, as a category of human knowledge concerned with events past, cannot be ignored for it stands as an inescapable standard against which the propriety of future choices must be assessed if repetition in error is to be minimized. In this manner myth remains an integral part of living history or culture process.

While human thought may turn to the past, human action is caught irrevocably in the "forward" flow of linear time; which is to say, while the past may be examined for lessons or models in the search for strategies for future action, the motivating factor behind the intellectual activity is the expression of the human "will" through time. In this flow, the innate creativity and self-criticism of man drives him to attain for himself what he conceives to be a better sociocultural system within which he can experience humanness. His mythic visions provide alternative sociocultural strategies for human existence. The most

obvious examples of this aspect of myth are embodied in "Utopian"literature and the doctrines of revitalization movements. Myth in this role takes on a liberating function. Yet man cannot leap from the conceptual boundaries of his extant world into a state of absolute "freedom" -- a state in which nothing is categorized. Man's most outstanding and undeniable characteristic is his ability to symbolize, and his language is the most fundamental symbolic system through the use of which he categories his perceived world. Through his language man creates his world, a process explained by Paulo Freire:

> . . . The word is more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible; accordingly, we must seek its constitutive elements. Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed -- even in part -- the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus to speak a true word is to transform the world. [To] exist humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Men are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection (Freire 1970: 17-18).

British novelist William Golding expressed the same view in the words of Pincher Martin, a flounderer in a sea of chaos:

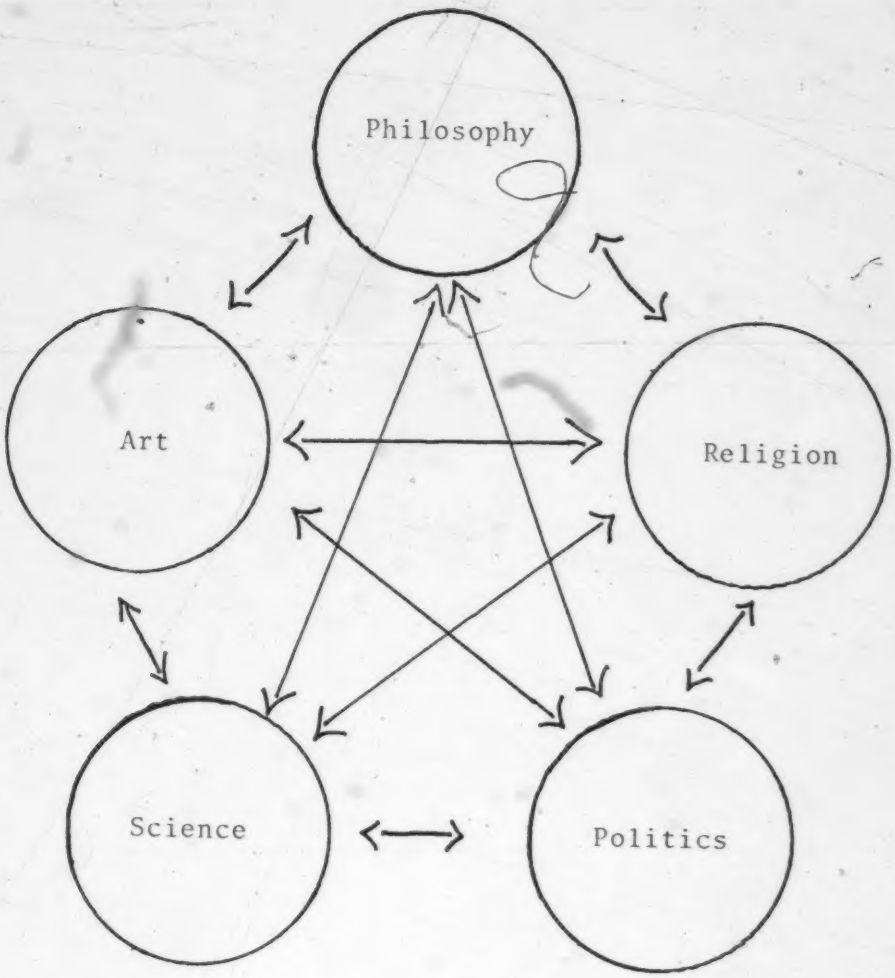
> I am busy surviving. I am netting down this rock with names and taming it. Some people would be incapable of understanding the importance of that.

> What is given a name is given a seal, a chain. If this rock tries to adapt me to its ways I will refuse and adapt it to mine. I will impose my routine on it, my geography. I will tie it down with names. If it tries to annihilate me with blotting-paper, then I will speak in here where my words resound and significant sounds assure me of my own identity (Golding 1965: 86-87).

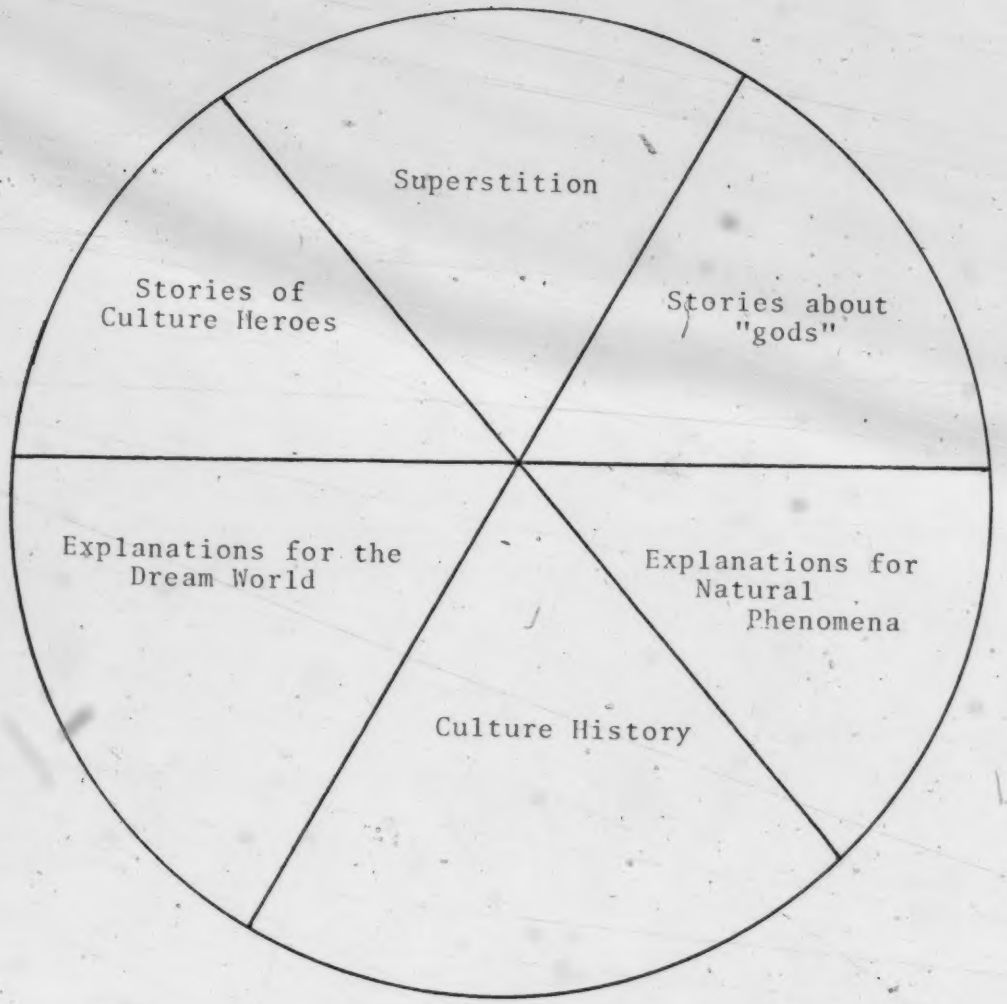
By virtue of the fact that humanness is defined, in part at least by man's essential symbolization, it is not even conceivable to seek "freedom" in terms of a leap into an abyss totally devoid of form constituted by intellectual categories. An attempt to find "freedom" in such a fashion would be an attempt to achieve the ultimate expression of nihilism. Therefore, man and the society of which he is invariably a part can seek liberation only in the form of new categories which provide novel perspectives or dispositions which in concert create the ordering principles which govern all his social and cultural activities. History contains the record of past orders. Every day life is the experience of existing orders. Dreams of the "ideal society" contain the incipient ideas for creating future order. Myth is the composite order, replete with all the contradiction of human existence.

Myth envisioned in this way represents both the static and the dynamic in human culture. It is both traditional and conservative in aspect as well as visionary and evocative. It contains a cumulative record of past achievements as well

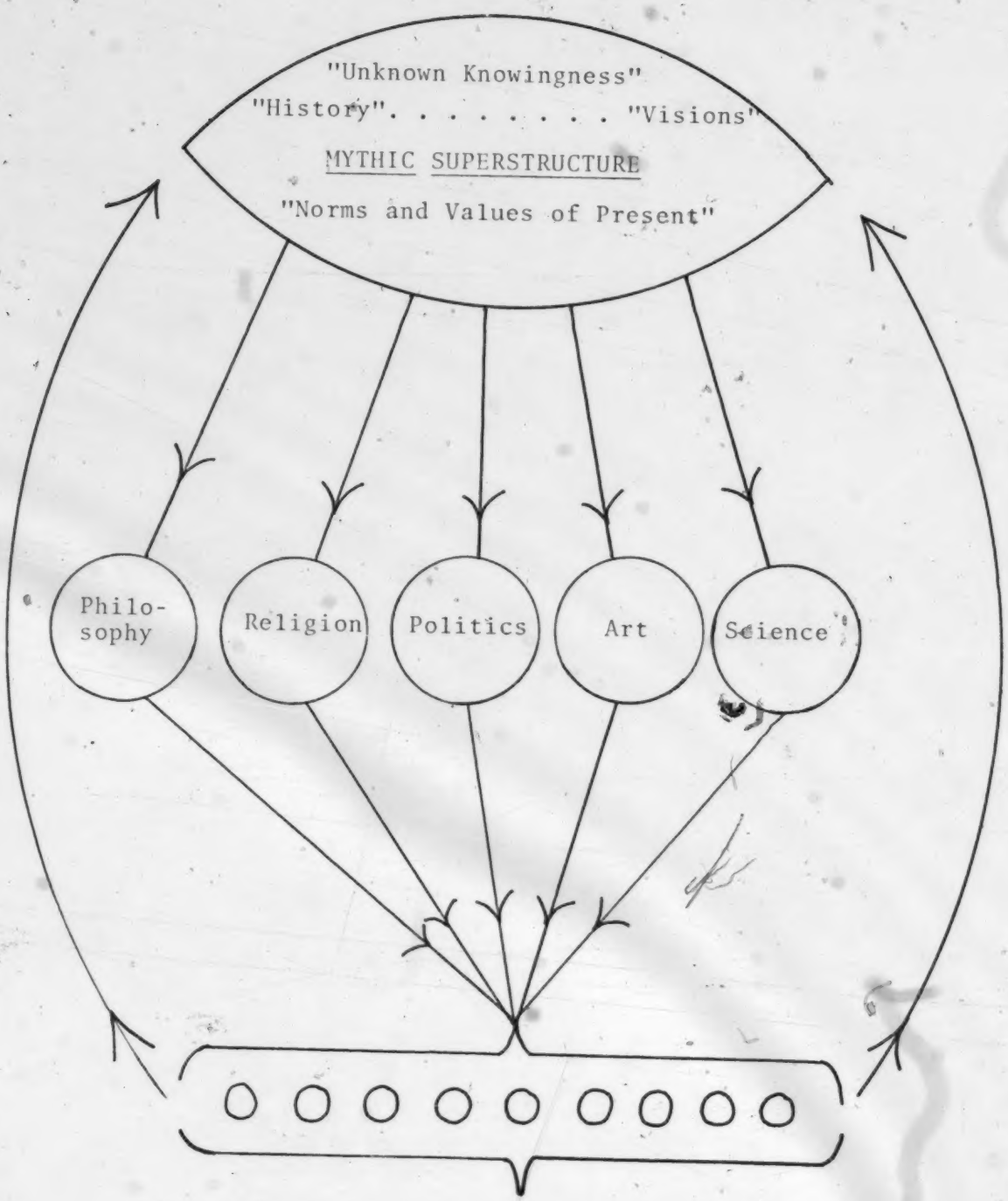
as an imperative to call up from the depths of the "unknowing knowingness" a potential for the future. This aspect of myth is analogous to Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of "depth grammar" which contains the basic propositions of meaning which render language comprehensible. In its fragmented form myth is reduced to specific categories of behaviour in a variety of ideologies and dogmas -- political, religious, artistic and philosophical. From the ordering principles of myth the institutions of the society evolve to maintain or achieve the meaning of the myth. This aspect of myth is similar to Wittgenstein's "surface grammar" which deals specifically with rules of perception and behaviour (Wittgenstein 1953: 7-8). The institutionalized, behavioral modalities themselves have been subjected to extensive study within the social sciences and the humanities. Religion, politics, art, philosophy, science, and so on, each constitutes a legitimate area for empirical study to investigate human behaviour. Even the interrelationships between the categories have been analysed, as illustrated in the following diagram:



Mythology itself has also been studied but its scope has been severely limited to only one or two of its integral aspects as illustrated on the next page:



What has not been subjected to adequate study is the well-spring of the mythic ordering principles themselves, and subsequently the most radical substratum of the myth-forming process which expresses itself in culture process in reference to the sub-systems of a culture. A diagramatic illustration of the model proposed in this thesis appears as follows:


"Unknown Knowingness"
"History". . . . . "Visions"
MYTHIC SUPERSTRUCTURE
"Norms and Values of Present"
Philo-
sophy
Religion
Politics
Art
Science
Constituent Membership of Society

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the role of myth in culture process as outlined in the preceding diagram and within the context of philosophical anthropology. It will attempt to answer the question "What is man?" not from the traditional Kantian point of view but rather from the precise perspective of Kierkegaard who asked "What does it mean to be man?" Kirkegaard's question can only be answered within the context of the process of symbolization which in itself provides the basis of human meaning. Myth is the most highly symbolic system of all, for it is the conceptual superstructure of society. Broadly defined, it is that category of human knowledge which encompasses both the perceived reality and the perceived potential of any given culture. In an attempt to emphasize its all-pervading but nebulous quality, Eric Dardel wrote:

> Our 'truth' of the moment is often only a myth that does not know it is one . . . . We make myths every day without knowing it. The myth making function is a universal and fundamental phenomena [sic] of whose emotional motivation the mind is largely unconscious (Sebeok 1972: 20).

Dardel's notion of myth expressed here diverges sharply from the traditional definitions listed in this chapter.

In order to investigate myth in the expansive terms suggested by Dardel and the final diagram of this chapter, Chapter Two will begin with a review of the works of

Emile Durkheim, focussing attention on his treatment of religion as an ordering system for social activities. His work is of particular importance to a study of myth inasmuch as it treats the relationship which obtains between empirical sense data on one hand and the categorical structure of knowledge on the other. Whereas Durkheim's theory treated religion as the supercategory under which all other sociocultural functions were subsumed, this thesis shall posit myth as the supercategory and religion as a highly symbolized sub-system within the mythic paradigm.

Chapter Three shall treat the problem of defining or describing myth in such a way as to incorporate all the essential qualities demanded by Dardel's expansive concept of myth and with respect to Durkheim's explicit concern for the intellectual superstructure of society. Chapter Four will examine the role of myth thus defined in terms of culture process and in Chapter Five the definition and role of myth will be unpacked in such a way as to operationalize the concept for use in field research.

CHAPTER II

MYTH AS A CONCEPT IN THE TRADITION OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF RELIGION

This chapter will explore the manner in which myth, philosophy and religion have been treated within the field of anthropology under the rubric of the anthropology of religion. The determination of the role of religion in the culture of man was a problem endemic to the work of the earliest professional social anthropologists. This concern stemmed mainly from the influence of the Cartesian tradition in which these men were trained. Implicit in DesCartes' fundamental premise, "I think, therefore I am", is the concept of human thought as the primary condition of human being. Religion as one of the most highly symbolic systems of human thought thus constituted a major focus for studies concerned with the nature of man.

Religion was the primary concern of the writings of Sir Edward Tylor, who became the first professor of Anthropology at Oxford University. The question "Where did man get religion?" first became meaningful during the Age of Exploration when European scholars first became

aware of a broad range of religious diversity in a rapidly expanding world. Prior to this age, European man had no reason for pondering the origin of religion: the answer had been self evident -- religion came from the Christian god who had bequeathed it to Adam in the Garden of Eden. But the accurate descriptions of racial variation mixed with the fantastic tales of half-human monsters carried home to Europe by the early explorers raised the question as to whether or not these strange "semi-human" creatures could also be the creations of the Christian god, and hence whether or not they would have "souls". The answer to the latter question was often negative and this opened the way for the horrendous inhumanities inflicted upon other racial groups by European man in ensuing centuries.

Geologists further exacerbated the growing religious enigma by arguing that their studies indicated an antiquity for both the earth and its human inhabitants which greatly exceeded the temporal constriction of the Biblical account of man's origin. At the same time, paleontologists were unearthing evidence which indicated that one form of life flowed from or merged with other life forms rather than having distinct morphological parameters as suggested in the Biblical account of creation. The final

blow to traditional Christian perspectives came with the publication of Charles Darwin's On The Origin of Species in 1859. The European intellect was finally forced to grapple with the idea that man was not a special and immutable creation of God and that man's temporal existence extended back through hundreds of millennia of slow development from a "lower form" of life. By this point in history, the question of an origin for religion apart from the Christian god had become a major intellectual issue, and it was to this question that the writings of Tylor and other early social anthropologists were addressed.

Because he was looking for the origin of religious phenomena, Tylor had to meet one essential criterion: he had to choose as a basal point for the inception of religious sentiments and behaviour in man an event or construct in the intellectual evolution of man which would be devoid of any prior religious significance. After careful deliberation, Tylor reduced his choice to two possible points of origin; first, to man's concern with images of his own dream world, and second, to man's reflection upon his niche in the natural environment. Tylor finally decided upon the former as the most basic point of origin for religious phenomena, treating the latter as a later development in human consciousness

(Tylor 1958: 11). Tylor's entire thesis was based on the assumption that man's conscious consideration of his dream world would logically lead him to a belief in a realm of super-human spirit entities. Tylor called this belief animism. The empirical evidence which underlay Tylor's theory came from his work in Mexico and Cuba where he was studying the geographical distribution of mythic motifs. He was at once struck by the similarity of mythic configurations in all the regions he studied, and ultimately concluded that the most central and unvarying feature of all religious phenomena was a belief in spirit beings (9-11).

Tylor postulated that the evolution from the dream itself to a belief in spirit beings involved three basic steps. The first step involved the formation of a dual-self concept -- that is, the formation of a conception of the human being as composed of both a physical body and a non-physical soul. Tylor argued that this idea would develop from an awareness of dream activity involving both the living dreamer and his acquaintances and relatives, some of whom the waking dreamer would know to be dead. In addition to this, all dream entities are capable of performing temporal and spatial feats impossible for the waking individual, and observation which would

introduce the idea of the "supernatural" into human consciousness. And finally, from an awareness of his own involvement in the activity of the dream while the physical body had remained prone, the dreamer would have to assume the existence of a part of the self capable of movement outside of and independent from the physical body. From this experience, Tylor postulated, came the idea of "soul". Thus Tylor's first step in the development of religious phenomena did meet the criterion he had earlier established, in that it did not rely upon any prior religious institution. What Tylor's first step did not explicate was how the soul, as a part of the human entity, became dissociated from the physical entity at death to become a totally free spirit such as that of dead relatives encountered in the dream state, nor did it establish how that spirit became the object of a cult or religious institution (Durkheim 1915: 60).

In his attempt to answer the objections raised to his theory, Tylor argued that the "primitive" man in whom religious experience first dawned had the mentality of a young child. Tylor held that, like the infant, early man could not distinguish between the animate and the inanimate worlds; so he would have attributed souls to all animate and inanimate creatures and objects alike. The souls of

men would thus remain directly involved with the activities of man and the souls of other objects and creatures in nature with their own particular entities. By this process, a philosophy of self would become expanded to a philosophy of the world. And when the spirit came to be conceived of as a unit distinct from the physical world the object of cult would thus be defined.

Still, it was obvious from Tylor's own study of mythology that man was just as concerned with his relationship to nature as he was to his own spirit aspect; so it became necessary for Tylor to take one final step in order to explain how a cult of nature, developed around the spirits of man and nature alike, came to dominate the more constricted existential concern with the "afterlife" of the self. The answer to this problem was simply put by Tylor when he noted that man was more immediately dependent for physical survival upon nature than he was upon the wandering doubles of his ancestors. Man could have only ideal and imaginary relationships with the dead, but he depended in a very direct and tangible way upon natural phenomena in his physical environment. And because he needed the co-operation of nature in order to survive, he came to implore the assistance of the spirits of nature with offerings and prayers, and thus the religion of

primordial man became complete with the institution of a cult of nature. Yet even with these clarifications to his theory, Tylor's animism did not gain lasting acceptance in anthropological circles. One of his most incisive and convincing critics was Emile Durkheim.

In the works of Emile Durkheim which followed those of Tylor and other early anthropologists, the treatment of religion took a distinct turn toward the social or institutional aspect of the phenomena. In his introduction to The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, first published in 1915, Durkheim immediately took Tylor to task over the importance the latter placed on the dream world in his theory of animism. Durkheim argued against a primary role for dreaming in the development of religious constructs because he saw nothing behind these images except "the nightmares of primitive minds". He held that Tylor's thesis reduced religion to nothing but a dream without any foundation in every day reality, and concluded that

> . . . it is an essential postulate of sociology that a human institution cannot rest upon an error and a lie, without which it could not exist. If it were not founded in the nature of things, it would have encountered in the facts a resistance over which it could never have triumphed (Durkheim 1915: 2, 69).

It is therefore necessary, according to Durkheim, to find "a concrete reality, and historical and ethnological observation alone can reveal that to us" (Durkheim 1915: 4).

When looking for a concrete reality upon which to base a theory of religion, Durkheim, like Tylor, turned to examples of "lower societies". However, Durkheim did so not because of a belief in any qualitatively different, pre-logical mentality postulated to be resident there, but rather, because in the lower societies there was limited development of individuality, smaller parameters for the social group, and a homogeneity in external circumstances not to be found in "higher societies". Durkheim argued that if the "social facts" themselves were simpler, it would follow that the relations between them would also be more simple and hence more apparent (Durkheim 1915: 5, 7).

Durkheim then took his greatest divergence from Tylor by denying the validity of a search for the origin of religious behaviour in the sense of origin as "first cause". He preferred to conceive of religious origins as being based upon "ever-present" causes. His concern with the issue of origins as formulated by Tylor stemmed largely from his desire to work within the positivist framework of the burgeoning social sciences, and he justified his own approach to religious origins in this way:

> The study we are undertaking is therefore a way of taking up again, but under new conditions, the old problem of the origin of religion. To be sure, if by origin we are to understand the very first beginning, the question has nothing scientific about it (Durkheim 1915: 8).

This statement reflects Durkheim's theoretical and methodological commitment to the positivism of Auguste Compte which recognized the validity of only the positive facts and observable phenomena with the objective relations of these and the laws which determine them. This position demands the abandonment of all inquiry into first causes or ultimate origins. However, the influence of the evolutionary tradition is also evident in Durkheim's rejection of the search for a first cause. With reference to this point he had concluded that there was no moment at which religion had begun to exist and hence the search for such a moment would be futile. Religion, like every other human institution would have developed over time and in relation to other burgeoning institutions.

In pursuing his criticism of Tylor's treatment of origins Durkheim turned once more to the issue of a primitive mentality, this time arguing that the development of cultural configurations cannot rest upon monolithically engraved motifs in the psychological constitution of man, but must depend, in part at least, upon

historical social factors. He was aware, however, that in the analysis of social phenomena a strict classical empiricism was too limited, since human experience treats two realities: perception and conception. Empiricism is applicable to perception only, and while our perceptions may be accepted as fact, our conceptions may not. Thus the concrete and the conceptual represent two disparate aspects of human knowledge.

> Under these conditions forcing reason back upon experience causes it to disappear, for it is equivalent to reducing the universality and necessity which characterizes it to pure appearance, to an illusion which may be useful practically, but which corresponds to nothing in reality; consequently it is denying all objective reality to the logical life, whose regulation and organization is the function of the conceptual categories. Classical empiricism results in irrationalism . . . (Durkheim 1915: 13, 14).

For the apriorists or rationalists, Durkheim had more respect, for while they were concerned with "objective reality", they did not reduce conceptual categories to empty, verbal artifices. In fact, they treated human knowledge as a unified whole, believing that "the world has a logical aspect which the reason expresses excellently". But while Durkheim agreed with the rationalists' basic premise, he rejected the reasoning which underlay it, for it was "necessary for them to give the mind a certain power of transcending experience and of adding to that which is

given to it directly". In other words, his objection is not with the premise itself, but rather with the fact that the rationalists provide neither explanation nor justification for it. To state that such a relationship between the concrete world and conceptual categories that man imposes upon it is inherent in human intellect is to Durkheim a retreat into tautological reasoning. For him it was necessary to demonstrate how it is that we can see certain relations in things which an examination of the things in themselves cannot reveal. If experience itself is not sufficient certain conditions which are exterior and prior to it must be presupposed. The proliferation of cultural variations is indicative of the fact that these conditions are mutable, realized at any given time only in a manner that is desirable (Durkheim 1915: 14, 15). Reason, as an individual experience, cannot explain such variation for in its most radical form it is pan-species and immutable. But if the concrete, social situation is injected into the problem as a point of origin for variation, a new attitude becomes possible. And it is from this position that Durkheim embarked in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life.

In the main corpus of his work, Durkheim related the existential condition of man to the social condition:

> There are two beings in him: an individual being which has its foundation in the organism and the circle of whose activity is therefore strictly limited, and a social being which represents the highest reality in the intellectual and moral order that we can know by observation -- I mean society. In so far as he belongs to society, the individual transcends himself, both when he thinks and when he acts (Durkheim 1915: 16 - 17).

Most scholars have emphasized Durkheim's concern with society to the point of excluding the role of the individual; but as the above statement clearly indicates, Durkheim himself was well aware of the intellectual activity of the individual being as an important facet of human development. His statement also answers the objection raised to the rationalists' neglect in explaining the relationship between social facts and intelligent action and at the same time strips the religious consideration of a spirit or god world inherent in Tylor's thesis from the study of religion. For Durkheim the gods are social, (not radical, psychological conventions), created by man in society and persisting with man in a reciprocal relationship. The situation of man is no longer envisioned exclusively in terms of man dying without his god or gods, but one in which the gods, too, would die without the socially organized support of man. Society itself has thus been cast as the prime mover or the "ever-present" cause. In this formulation a dialectic relationship persists in which the individual struggles

to promote self interest without incurring the disapproval of society, for man is ultimately aware of his dependence upon and inextricable commitment to the societal conventions and knows that to abandon them would result in an end to "being human". This position does not deny social revolt as a very real possibility, but merely postulates society as an ineluctable referent in the study of man. In short, "it is the very authority of society, transferring itself to a certain manner of thought which is the indispensible condition of all common action" (Durkheim 1915: 17).

Durkheim thus formulated a sociological theory of knowledge in which society itself was viewed as a part of nature, the most refined expression of which is to be found in the human context. Since the basic tenets and practices of social behaviour are universally permeated with religious overtones, both overt and covert, Durkheim chose to focus on the religious aspects of society, for although religious concerns tend to coalesce into institutional form in societies, the basic social ideas addressed "still remain at the foundation of human intelligence" (Durkheim 1915: 18, 20). Viewed in this way, reason is seen to respond to social reality in man's attempt to create an ever better human society. This position

was based on Durkheim's conviction that "religious conceptions have as their object, before everything else, to express and explain, not that which is abnormal in things, but on the contrary, that which is constant and regular" (Durkheim 1915: 28).

By treating religion as the expression of the normal, Durkheim raised the issue of the use of the terms "norm" and "value" in the social sciences. In a strictly Durkheimian sense, norms are the function of socially differentiated behaviours or roles, whereas values are shared by all members of the largest reference group -- the total social system. Norms are specific, values are general. The value system thus consists of the set of normative judgments concerning role specializations and behaviours categorized both conceptually and practically to facilitate the achievement of the "good society" defined by the common values. Society, as conceived by Durkheim, therefore includes the ideological as well as the material; that is to say, the social system provides a conceptual framework for action. Durkheim thus acknowledged that we can study social forces only through their external manifestations, but warned that the researcher must not fall into the foible of assuming that the social phenomena and the generating matrix are mutually inclusive.

In his early works Durkheim himself had held that the observable social realities were in fact reflections of the complex social forces driving them; but in later works he concluded that the material expressions are not accurate reflections of the dynamics of culture. This idea of society demands both a functional and a structural analysis in order to integrate the conceptually disparate parts into the larger unity, and defines the basic goal of anthropology to be the determination of relationships which obtain between ideas and social morphology as they interact in the process of becoming (Durkheim 1915: xxvii - xxix).

Barely one year before the publication of The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Bronislaw Malinowski began his first field work. In 1915, he arrived in the Trobriand Islands where he was to collect the data for his research. One of Malinowski's primary contributions to anthropology was the manner in which he collected data. Rather than mere brief visits to a certain locale or the use of library materials, he pitched his tent in the middle of his adopted village and personally watched the every day activities of its inhabitants (Glick 1973: 184). The personal acquisition of research data was but one major shift in anthropological methodology heralded by Malinowski and his contemporaries.

The intellectual climate of the time was steeped in the growing empirical tradition which led researchers to focus their attentions upon the form of social institutions as opposed to their content. The analyses which developed out of their activities therefore have been more concerned with behaviour than with intellectual pursuits in the social units they studied. For Malinowski and his colleagues Durkheim's problem had become a premise: that is to say, instead of trying to determine how the disparate parts of society grew into a functioning unity, they assumed that they did form a functional unity which was then to be described and subjected to empirical analysis. Paradoxically, it was Durkheim's own concern with the "normative" quality of society which led researchers away from the dynamic aspects of culture process which were the fundamental concern of Durkheim himself. Within the parameters of the empirical tradition analyses were synchronic in time and functional in terms of how a culture maintained itself -- a perspective which resulted in a study of the static rather than the dynamic.

The study of the anthropology of religion suffered from yet another factor during the working years of Malinowski in that religion itself in the western world had lost its importance as a focus for research. Now

comfortably settled into the idea that man had evolved biologically from other life forms, western scholars were content to assume that intellectual evolution had followed the same route. Viewed from this perspective, religion fell into disrepute as a a "pseudo-science" aimed at answering the same questions then being probed by the true or "hard" sciences. There could be little interest in pursuing a dying artifact of man's intellectual infancy. In fact, Malinowski himself, one of the major contributors to the anthropology of religion, personally dealt the field a serious blow when he summarized religion by stating in his earliest writings that the heart of all religious belief and practice lies in man's inability to face his own individual extinction in death. The belief in spirits in this context is nothing more than the expression of human desire to continue to participate in human affairs beyond the time of physical death (Glick 1973: 185). In short, for Malinowski, the purpose of religion was to deny death. He thus turned from the study of religion in general to that of magic, describing how magic functioned as a pre-scientific means of manipulating the environment.

After Malinowski's blatant regression into the Tylorian framework, there were very few significant studies in the anthropology of myth or religion, per se. The works

of Alfred Radcliffe-Brown and E. E. Evans-Pritchard stand out as exceptions to a general nadir in the anthropology of religion. Yet Malinowski himself came to a realization in his later years that myth and religion had a more important function in society than his earlier works had admitted. Malinowski's intellectual reversal was set forth in "Myth in Primitive Psychology", published in 1954. In this brief article he concluded that primitive culture myth fulfilled an indispensable function inasmuch as it expressed, enhanced and codified belief. In this manner it served to safeguard and enhance morality and provide practical rules for the guidance of man. Viewed from this perspective myth becomes a vital ingredient of human civilization -- a hard-worked active force. It is therefore neither an idle intellectual explanation nor an artistic imagery, but "a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom" (Malinowski 1954: 101). And by the time of his death his views had shifted even further toward an expansive and important function for both myth and religion, as Annemarie de Waal Malefijt noted in her book, Religion and Culture: An Introduction to Anthropology of Religion. Referring to a posthumously published article by Malinowski, she commented that all allusions to "primitive" faith and culture are omitted, and that the general tone of

the article indicates that Malinowski had extended his views to include all forms of myth and religion (de Waal Malefijt 1968: 179). The posthumous article published in 1962 came at a time when anthropologists were turning their attention once more to the dynamics of culture in a new paradigmatic model based on Hegelian dialectics. Under the rubric of the dialectical model attention once again turned to the problematic aspects of the interrelatedness of sociocultural phenomena and the role of religion within these relationships. And it is fitting that at this time scholars are returning to the first major work done in this area: to the work of Emile Durkheim.

Talcott Parsons in his essay "Durkheim on Religion Revisited: Another Look at The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life", discussed the need for a careful re-evaluation of Durkheim's contribution to the social sciences. According to Parsons, the wisdom of hindsight which contemporary scholars now possess allows them to understand Durkheim's work as less of an epistemological exercise in the sociology of knowledge and ethnography of a "primitive" peoples and as more of a study in human evolution -- "not merely of human societies in the analytical sense, but of the human condition generally".

More specifically, Durkheim's study of religion can no longer be viewed as a mere sociological exercise but rather as a study "of the place of religion in human action generally". In short, Durkheim's work points away from the study of religion as a social sub-system constituting a meaningful unit in itself towards a more comprehensive consideration of religion as it persists and develops within cultural and personality systems in general. It is evident therefore, in Parson's estimation, that Durkheim was not primarily concerned with the origins of human knowledge as such, but rather in the origins of the categories of understanding into which knowledge is classified. Commenting on this aspect of Durkheim's work, Parsons wrote:

> What I take to be his basic theorem is that human society and the cultural framework of the human condition, including knowledge, have evolved concomitantly from a common basis and, in relatively advanced stages of sociocultural development, have come to be differentiated from each other. This conception of a common origin is very different indeed from a one-way conception of determinism, namely, that of society as an independently existing entity, determining the nature of the organization of knowledge. This of course, has been the common sense of what might be called the vulgar sociology of knowledge, of which Durkheim most definitely was not a proponent (Parsons 1973: 157 - 158).

This perspective places Durkheim squarely in the Kantian tradition with its emphasis on the duality which obtains

between empirical sense data on the one hand and the categorical structure of knowledge on the other, for as Parsons noted, in the conclusion of The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Durkheim cited Kant's conviction that cognitive knowledge and moral judgment are linked inasmuch as they both treat universality of reference. And as he further noted, this notion is fundamental to Durkheim's thesis with its concern for the duality of the universal and the particular, of the cognitive and the moral references (Parsons 1973: 158). Durkheim specifically discussed this issue when he denied the existence of a true antinomy between science on the one hand and morals and religion on the other. He continued:

> Kant understood this very well, and therefore he made the speculative reason and the practical reason two different aspects of the same faculty. According to him, what makes their unity is the fact that the two are directed towards the universal (Durkheim 1915: 445).[1]

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1. Durkheim continued in this statement to clarify the nature of the duality as follows: "Rational thinking is thinking according to the laws which are imposed upon all reasonable beings; acting morally is conducting one's self according to those maxims which can be extended without contradiction to all wills. In other words, science and morals imply that the individual is capable of raising himself above his own peculiar point of view and of living an impersonal life. In fact, it cannot be doubted that this is a trait common to all the higher forms of thought and action"(Durkheim 1915: 445).

It is with the distinctions drawn between pure and practical reason and between ideal society and social reality that the notion of the sacred/profane dichotomy becomes meaningful for the researcher in the social sciences -- sacred having a moral reference and profane a strictly cognitive or empirical reference in which the profane strives to unite with the universal sacred in the realization of the "good society". And it would be the dialectic tension which obtains between the sacred and the profane categories which would drive society. In Durkheim's treatment of the "origins" of religion he envisioned an evolutionary process in the earliest stages of which all sociocultural functions were subsumed into a more unified system which only later became categorically differentiated into other sub-systems such as politics, economics, religion and law. Therefore, the task now before anthropologists is the testing of the validity of the social categories in the moral frame of reference to ascertain the extent to which the disparately conceived secular activities of society are directed at the common goal of achieving the culturally defined vision of the "good society", not as a monolithic vision, but as a vision in flux. This would involve not only an examination of how the vision affects concrete changes in the

social reality of a society, but also how persisting social realities can influence the vision itself in an ongoing dialectic process emerging out of this "ever-present" cause. It was to this very process that Durkheim made reference in the conclusion of The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life when he wrote: "Really and truly human thought is not a primitive fact; it is the product of history; it is the ideal limit towards which we are constantly approaching, but which in all probability we shall never succeed in reaching" (Durkheim 1915: 445).

CHAPTER III

MYTH: A CULTURE CONCEPT

Before one can proceed with a discussion of religious behaviour in terms of a culturally held ideal of the "good society", one must formulate a more specific analytic framework for defining that idea. One possible construct which has this potential -- and which is presented in this chapter as the total body of extant human knowledge in any given culture -- is that of "myth". The purpose of this chapter, then, is to analyze the concept of myth as it relates to that part of the diagram on page 11 labelled "Mythic Superstructure".

Myth, as a concept, is extremely problematic in that it has been imbued with a plenitude of connotations and a multitude of definitions. In popular, lay context, for example, myth has traditionally meant "stories about gods" (Campbell 1970, 49). However, as stated in the preceeding chapter, even religious phenomena cannot be tied primarily to concepts of gods or spirits since they must ultimately have a social referent. This is not to suggest as Durkheim did, that religion can be treated exclusively as a social phenomenon which ignores the intellectual component of the

disparate individuals of a society; rather, religious concepts are related to the social milieu in which they are accepted as expressions of specific realities. Lewis Mumford has argued that a strict adherence to traditional religious notions about "gods" could serve only to obscure the more basic nature of both myth and religion, which is to explain or measure the human experiences from which they sprang in the first place. To this extent, he maintained that myth must be viewed primarily as a structuring principle or set of ordering categories for society and that the introduction of "gods" into religious phenomena represents a later and hence secondary development -- an embellishment which may add to myth without changing its fundamental function (Mumford 1966: 50). In Mumford's terms deification represents the reduction of experience into comprehensive, categorized units, which, as a result of the active nature of the experiential world which produces it, is endowed with an emotive or generative power of its own. The creation of gods in this manner does not reflect, as some philosophers have suggested, a regression in man's evolutionary development, but rather a growing creativity in organizing the results of an expanding awareness and comprehension of cosmic order. In this manner the gods

serve as objectifications of the perceived universe. As such, gods are symbolic expressions of the finite.

Ernst Cassirer also explored the developmental significance of "gods" in mythology. The deification process, according to Cassirer, began with man finding a novel principle of differentiation in his own existence and in his social life which then became crystallized or defined in the shape of a "god". And the novel principles did not spring from abstract thought but from man's work. Increasingly complex divisions of labour themselves introduced new eras of religious thought (Cassirer 1944: 127). This process was also an alienating factor for man in that he was both given a narrower personal sphere of significance and denied a more direct experience of cosmic unity through the mediating god which constituted a social object. In his treatment of the importance of the division of labour in both mythic and religious terms, Mumford noted that prior to the rise of civilization, the gods of vegetation and animal fertility had dominated human culture. These gods were themselves subject to human weaknesses, suffering, misfortune and death. Under the domination of these gods, society had been relatively homogenous. The implications of this for man as an individual were noted by

Joseph Campbell, who stated that among the early food collecting hunters, foragers and fishers who adhered to the gods of vegetation and animal fertility, the social units were neither very large nor complex. The only divisions of labour were in terms of sex and age with each individual pretty much in control of the entire cultural heritage. The major implication of this limited division of labour rests in the fact that "every adult in such a context could -- in terms of at least the local cultural model -- become a total human being" (Campbell 1972: 62 - 63). Then civilizations developed in which a king or king-priest dominated all facets of social life. The king was as socially isolated from his subjects as the cosmic gods were from the gods of the field. The king, backed by the ascendent power of the cosmic gods, was able to control the mass social mobilization of his subject population (Mumford 1966: 167 - 169). Whereas the gods of vegetation and animal fertility had served to create a unifying focus based on common consensus, the cosmic gods and the new social order which they represented became tools for the calculated manipulation of the subject population. Under these conditions, no invidivual could hope, in cultural terms, to become a

"total human being".[1]

It must not be inferred from the preceeding argument, however, that the gods are symbolic expressions of the structure of man's experiential social world and no more, as Durkheim had postulated, for they also function in the intellectual development of man. By giving shape and form to his experience in the structure of deities, man was able to externalize his experiences and subsequently gain the psychic distance necessary for reflection upon them (Read 1954: 150). Gods themselves, therefore, represent categories or sub-sets of human experience. Using the insights gained into his own psyche from this process, man then was able to gain more conscious control of his own destiny. This was an important aspect of man's development, for as Mumford has noted, raw human creativity in itself is "amoral", which is to say, it may manifest itself in both beneficial and

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1. Explaining the implications of a highly complex division of labour, Campbell wrote: "With the rise and development in the ancient and Near East of comparatively well-to-do, settled communities supported by grain agriculture and stock-breeding, life became much more complex; and with the gradual increase of such communities both in number and in size, highly specialized departments of knowledge became increased". Cities then grew in which "no one could possibly hope to become a total human being. Each was but a part man" (Campbell 1972: 63).

destructive ways. The cultural order crystallized and expressed in the mythic superstructure was vital to controlling the creative potential in that it came to serve as a container in the sense that it provided parameters for human activity (Mumford 1966: 41, 50).

Concepts of deity and related beliefs concerning the nature of man and his relationship with his cosmos are teleological responses to the perceived world. As such, they are no less "real" than man's sensory experiences of the concrete world or those of his more ephemeral dream world. Durkheim noted this tangible, empirical aspect of religious experience when he observed that the man who has communicated with his god is not merely a man who has seen new truths, but a man who is stronger (Durkheim 1915: 416). The strength gained from communion with his god can be used either to endure the trials of existence or to conquer them. In this manner the human will is supported in its struggle with the nebulous problems of morality and happiness. The human will thus strives to achieve, through living praxis, the dreams and visions of the "good society".

The "naturalists" constitute a school of mythologists who sought to cope with the problem of the role of "gods" in mythology by eliminating them altogether. Whereas the

"deists" had viewed myths as "stories about gods", the "naturalists" came to view myth as "pre-scientific explanations for natural events". An extreme statement of this position was made by Edith Hamilton in her book Mythology when she wrote that "myth has nothing to do with religion. It is an explanation of something in nature, how for instance, any and everything in the universe came into existence" (Hamilton 1942: 12). In the "naturalist" school, myth is reduced to a corpus of primitive superstition. In addition, "religion", as used by Hamilton, refers to only the institutional aspect of the phenomenon which reflects only a limited portion of man's "religiousness". The concept of religion must include the human propensity for feeling, intuition, and concern for the basic existential questions of life including the individual will to live and the social will to communicate and undertake action with other individuals. Religion thereby constitutes one of the social sub-systems through which man seeks to solve problems personally within the larger conceptual parameters of the society to which he belongs. This suggests a broader scope of influence and meaning for the larger mythic superstructure than most definitions allow for. The need for a more expansive definition of myth was aknowledged by Malinowski

in one of his last articles "Myth in Primitive Psychology", the purpose of which was to demonstrate the profound influence of myth in the everyday activities of the Melanesian societies he had studied. He specifically set out his objectives:

> The thesis of the present work is that an intimate connection exists between the work, the mythos, the sacred tales of a tribe, on the one hand, and their ritual acts, their moral deeds, their social organization, and even their practical activities, on the other (Malinowski 1954: 96).

Malinowski's view echoes once more Kant's concern that a study of mythology must treat both the homogeneity of the sacred, value-oriented sphere of reference as well as the specification of the profane, secular sphere as it relates back to the sacred. This is a problem which Cassirer also addressed when he wrote that "there is no ontological difference between the two perspectives, but rather, both are aspects of a 'two-fold interest in human reason'" (Cassirer 1946: 7). And, he maintained, this twofold interest must account for both the empirical and rational as well as the emotional or intuitive and irrational aspects of man (Cassirer 1946: 12). For Cassirer this interest was to be found in its most radical form in myth and thus he concluded that "in myth man begins to learn a new and strange art: the art of

expressing, that means of organizing, his most deeply rooted instincts, his hopes and fears" (Cassirer 1946: 48). According to this definition, myth is not only an expression of man's basic nature as perceived by a given society but it is also an imperative to action. Myth, in relation to culture or society, by this definition becomes the all-pervasive superstructure of society, embodying both the sacred and profane, for each secular action is tempered by the values of the sacred and can be measured in terms of value judgments only by reverting immediately to the value sphere. In this manner, while the two spheres may be conceptually isolated, in actual practice they are in a state of constant interaction through the living process of man's activities in society.

Cassirer cogently summarized his theory in another work, An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture:

> Man's outstanding characteristic, his distinguishing mark, is not his metaphysical or physical nature -- but his work. It is this work, it is the system of human activities, which defines and determines the circle of "humanity". Language, myth, religion, art, science, history are the constituents, the various sectors of this circle. "A philosophy of man" therefore must be a philosophy which would give us insight into the fundamental structure of each of these human activities, and which at the same time would enable us to

> understand them as an organic whole. Language, art, myth, religion are not isolated, random creations. They are held together by a common bond. But this bond is not a vinculum substantiale . . . it is rather a vinculum functionale. It is the basic function of speech, of myth, of art, of religion that we must attempt to trace back to a common origin (Cassirer 1944: 93).

In the search for the common origin of human activities which have become conceptually discrete, it must not be assumed that we are necessarily looking for a simple construct. Martin Heidegger was aware of a tendency for scholars to proceed upon this premise when he cautioned that the basic error lays in the belief that history is a progression from the weak and clumsy toward the strong and efficacious. According to Heidegger, "the beginning is the uncanniest and mightiest", and what follows in history is the shallowness and diffusion of specialization and fragmentation (Mehta 1971: 134). The loss of mightiness expressed by Heidegger refers to the continuing specialization of myths during the rise and persistence of various forms of civilization. The specialization of myths is analogous to the change experienced by individuals in the burgeoning of civilizations as described by Campbell. Civilizations with their redefinition of the roles of man into niches of ever decreasing scope for the individuals became

themselves more specialized. The primary divisions of major cultural diversions were succinctly described by Joseph Campbell in Myths to Live By when he pointed out that Westerners take for granted their ideas concerning the rights of self-hood of the individual without realizing that for the man from the Orient or the primitive man these concepts have no meaning. In fact, most of the western beliefs concerning the nature of the individual are repugnant to the ideals, aims and orders of life of most of the peoples of this earth. And yet as Campbell emphasized, the western perspective is a "truly great 'new thing'" and constitutes one revelation of a "properly human spiritual ideal, true to the highest potentiality of our species" (Campbell 1972: 61). Thus Campbell expressed his conviction that the myth-forming process is the most fundamental basis man has for formulating and communicating his humanness.

Ernst Cassirer in The Myth of the State followed in turn the development of ever more specialized western, or more particularly European, cultural development through an analysis of the mythic superstructure upon which each was based, analysing how each subsequent age homed in one increasingly specific facets of the mythic corpus to play out each aspect in greater detail. While

this resulted in a gain in the form of development in one specific cultural area, a concomitant loss was suffered in the overall scope of potential experience. To illustrate the growing specialization of myth hand in hand with the growth of specialization in human society, one can consider the ubiquitous myths of creation. These represent the most fundamental statements about the nature of man and form the basis upon which various traditions build.

One of the most succinct analyses of the Adamic myth, in terms of defining man, is given by Jane Roberts in The Nature of Personal Reality, for example. Roberts interprets the serpent as the symbol of the deepest knowledge within creaturehood which contains within itself the impetus to rise above or beyond itself. Eve, the female aspect, represents the intuitive element of the race which initiates all activity aimed at self-transcendence. Adam, as representative of the active, conscious ego, could act only after the intuitive possibility had been presented to him. By accepting that which the intuitive offered, the ego was able to achieve a new birth as "rational" man replete with necessary alienation experienced by "choosing" consciously to act rather than relying exclusively upon the organismic instincts to

direct behaviour. Roberts then summarized the importance of the conclusion of the Adamic myth by stating that "the tree of knowledge did indeed offer its fruits -- and 'good and bad' -- because this was the first time there were any kinds of choices available, and free will" (Roberts 1974: 269 - 270). In the formation of this particular myth, man defined himself for the first time as a rational being unique in a cosmos of instinctive creatures. The creation myth as discussed by Roberts is that espoused generally by members of the western tradition as opposed to that of the eastern tradition in which man, rather than being distinct from god, is viewed as a part of or emanation from god -- a concept now gaining more popularity in the western world as well.

In the creation myths of the eastern tradition, god, or more specifically, the All That Is, was in a state of non-being. This is to be interpreted not as a state of nothingness but as a state in which probabilities and possibilities are known or anticipated but are blocked from expression much in the way that an artist is blocked from realizing his art if he is without the paints and canvas to give it concrete form. Because the All That Is was unable to give expression to its

conscious perceptions it was in a state of agony in which the powers of creativity were known but the means by which to produce them were not known. As the agony grew it became strong enough to become its own impetus so that the All That Is initiated within itself the means to be. The All That Is thus initiated a means to actualize its dreams through the creation of a physical world populated by discrete individuals through whom there could be a cosmic multiplication of consciousness that could not be achieved within the non-physical and singular unity of the All That Is itself. Fragments of the All That Is were thus released and embodied in individual consciousnesses which undertook to give form to the myriad probabilities which constitute man's ineluctible creative explosiveness (Roberts 1970: 240-243).

This creation myth not only provides for a definition of the basic nature of man but also clearly indicates that the "purpose" of man's life is to differentiate and expand experience. For "primitive" man, as Campbell explained, the differentiation was minimal, being based on divisions of sex and age only. Within these small bands or tribes the familial unit was the basic model for organizing principles. Life was, under these conditions, regulated by

rules of kinship through which matters of descent and residence were controlled. As cities and nations developed with their increasing specialization, and dependence upon discrete segments of society grew, a more complex set of ordering principles was evolved. Kings and bureaucratic forms of government supplanted the simpler principles of the familial unit.

Both renditions of the creation myth are important to a study of the ontological grounding of myth. The Adamic myth is of particular importance to a world in which the theory of physical evolution is accepted, for here we have the most fundamental statement of man's being as it first became distinct from that of other animals. Reason rather than instinct became dominant with the concomitant creation of choice. Choice in turn implies responsibility for consequence, and the possibility of both appropriate choice and innapropriate choice introduces the concept of guilt. The Adamic myth, with its fundamental definition of the basic nature of man, constitutes in part an interpretative device to enable man to evaluate his choices. It is because of this aspect of myth that the guilt here referred to is not what might be called "artifical guilt" which reflects upon events past, but rather "natural guilt" which reflects upon events future;

that is, a guilt or rememberance of inappropriateness of actions in the past which acts as a precautionary measure or reminder before an event in the future (Roberts 1970: 178). It is for this reason that history is a vital constituent of the mythic superstructure, for it represents the collective natural guilt of whole social units. This phenomenon is therefore not identical to the instrumental conditioning of animals, for it involves value judgments on the part of an individual consciousness which says either "Do this again for it was good" or "Do not do this again for it was not good". Hence as man moved forward from his primal awareness of himself as distinct from other creatures by virtue of his reason, he accumulated a corpus of knowledge concerning the appropriateness or inappropriateness of certain actions -- knowledge which in turn also became appended to or imbedded in the mythic vision of man.

The eastern rendition of the creation myth which deals with the fragmentation and subsequent materialization of the All That Is similarly envisions in mythic terms the exploration of possible responses and a learning process as to what is good or ideal. As these experiences became incorporated into mythology they created a background of action replete with a value system. This

value system, however, is traditionally viewed as synonymous with a moral system. This is not an acceptable interpretation, for the values themselves as rendered in the mythic corpus are monolithic. Rather, morality is a part of the interactive process which obtains between the mythic ideal and the existential reality, between individual thought and being in a social context. It is in the interstice of value and action that further judgment occurs.

Myth may even be didactic enough to illustrate the nature of the consequences to be anticipated if certain paths of action are pursued. The results as given may be overtly desirable or undesirable to survival, but the question as to whether they are moral depends upon the interpretation of an action in a social context. This point is perhaps best illustrated by Claude Levi-Strauss in his analysis of the Oedipus myth as outlined in Structural Anthropology. He begins his analysis by breaking down the myth into its constituent mythemes as outlined in the chart on page 54 of this thesis. All the mythemes in each column exhibit one common feature. In the first column all entries describe events in which the importance of blood relationships are overemphasized and overrated. Because these relationships are more intimate

THE MYTH OF OEDIPUS			
Cadmos seeks his sister Europa, ravished by Zeus			
		Cadmos kills the dragon	
	The Spartoi kill one another		
			Labdacos (Laios' father) = lame (?)
	Oedipus kills his father Laios		
			Laios (Oedipus' father) = left-sided (?)
		Oedipus kills the Sphinx	
			Oedipus = swollen-foot (?)
Oedipus marries his mother, Jocasta			
	Eteocles kills his brother, Polynices		
Antigone buries her brother, Polynices, despite prohibition			

(From Levi-Strauss 1967: 120).

than they should be they represent violations of the principle of differentiation in the spiritual ontology of man as a social being. The second column is the inversion of the first or the underrating of blood relationships. Because the relationships of this column are not as intimate as they should be, they represent violations of the unity principle. This opposition presents us with one of the most enigmatic qualities of man as a social being; namely, that he strives at one and the same time to differentiate and expand experience while he strives to realize the oneness of humanity. The message of the Oedipus myth lies in its illustration of the need to respond in social action in such a way as to realize both the need for human diversification and unity while neglecting neither. The third column of Levi-Strauss' analysis contains material concerning the slaying of monsters. The fourth column consists of the names of the mythic actors which share the common linguistic feature of lameness in their meanings. The final column relates to difficulties in walking straight and standing upright. The third and fourth columns are of particular interest in relation to man's sapient development as Levi-Strauss has indicated:

> Column three refers to monsters. The dragon is a chthonian being which has to be killed in order that mankind be born from the Earth; the Sphinx is a monster unwilling to permit men to live. That last unit reproduces the first one, which has to do with the autochthonous origin of mankind. Since the monsters are overcome by men, we may thus say that the common feature of the third column is the denial of the autochthonous origin of man (Levi-Strauss 1967: 211).

The last two columns therefore treat the mythic issue of the basic nature of man. The contents of these two columns link in an interesting fashion with those of the first two columns. Once more the paradox of man seeking to attain both diversity and oneness is evidenced in the structure of the myth. Not only does Oedipus slay the monsters which represent the instinctive, animal ancestry of man -- he also kills his father. Juxtaposed to this extreme illustration of man's attempt to deny or escape the nature of his own origins is the image of Oedipus marrying his own mother as a symbolic expression of his desire to return to the unity of the one from whom he came.

The last item of the first column also warrants specific comment since it treats the problem of contradiction which often arises when a social action cannot escape a conflict between two disparate values. Antigone, by tradition, must bury her brother, but she is also under prohibition from doing so. The myth itself contains no

solution to her moral dilemma, it merely presents an illustration for consideration. Ultimately, the individual can only weigh the values, make the moral decision, and prepare to face the social consequences.

Myth thus contains two critical attributes: first a definition of the nature of man in its most radical form as perceived by a culture, and second, a value system created from the consciousness of responsibility in the exercise of free will in social action. In the process of acting out the myth and the growth of experience, certain aspects of the myth may come to demand special attention. When developments in such areas as technology require the reorganization of social structure and action, it may be necessary to re-evaluate an extant definition of man which contradicts the demands placed upon him. This in turn reflects upon the values which may then also demand revamping with far-reaching implications in decision-making and hence in the sphere of morality. This whole process thus has the bifold result of narrowing the scope of potential developmental paths in favour of an expansion of experience along one path and a subsequent reworking of at least some facets of the myth itself. In turn, the answers to man's most radical questions about himself will be altered in relation to

shifts in the myth which defines both man and his values. Myth thus conceived is an all-pervasive aspect of culture to such an extent that it cannot often be conceptually isolated by those who adhere to it. This quality was noted by Eric Dardel when he wrote that every period declares its truth in terms of myth:

> Our 'truth' of the moment is often only a myth that does not know it is one, and as M. Jourdain put it, we make myths every day without knowing it. The myth-making function is a universal and fundamental phenomenon of whose emotional motivation the mind is largely unconscious (Sebeok 1972: 20).

But however unconscious the myth may be, it is nevertheless acted out by man in society through language, art, philosophy, religion, and so on. Therefore, it is necessary to turn our attention to society and its various sub-systems in order to understand the nature of the mythic dynamic which drives man -- a consideration that must account not only for the relationships which inhere between the conceptual categories themselves but also the formative principles involved in the intellectual modality from which they emerge.

The traditional concept of myth does not have a broad enough scope to be useful in cultural studies. Although it does contain "stories about gods" and "pre-scientific explanations for natural phenomena" as well

as a record of cultural history, myth is much more than any one of these aspects alone. It is a basic definition of the nature of man as conceived of by a given society as well as a realm of values and norms with which to measure human experience within that society. As such, myth recognizes the radical contradiction in man which demands the satisfaction of his need both for a realization of the expansion and diversification of human experience and for union with the oneness of his cosmos. The mythic superstructure provides the general framework for social action through which the individual can hope to achieve his own existential significance or "meaning" of life. With the rise of civilization myths themselves have become more specialized and man has categorized the various aspects of his mythic visions into specific spheres of concern. Both the objectification of the mythic vision represented in the structure of gods and in the disparate sub-systems of society such as religion and politics represent the crystalizations of the mythic vision into foci for social action; but before the relevance of the myth thus categorized can be considered we must examine the myth-forming process itself as it emanates from the very being of man.

CHAPTER IV

MYTH AND CULTURE PROCESS

In this chapter we shall investigate the creative aspect of myth, which is dual in nature. Myth embodies the vision of a future "good society"; but it is also the expression of the ontological development of the individual within society. The direction this activity takes within the larger societal context is indicated in the diagram on page 11 by the lines which lead from the individual members of society to the mythic superstructure. It is this aspect of myth, the actual myth-forming process, which is most in need of explication; so the focus of this chapter is on the question of the manner in which the basic mythic constructs come into being in the consciousnesses of individuals and how these constructs relate to the categories of the social subsystems through which man strives to realize his vision of the "good society".

"Truth" as perceived by a given culture is synonymous with its vision of the "good society", and culture process is in effect the search for truth. Gotthold Lessing emphasized the importance of the search for truth

itself as early as 1778 in Eine Duplik, a treatise quoted at length by Freidrich Nietzsche:

> "Not the truth in whose possession any man is, or thinks he is, but the honest effort he has made to find out the truth, is what constitutes the worth of a man. For it is not through the possession but through the inquiry after truth that his powers expand, and in this alone consists his every growing perfection. Possession makes calm, lazy, proud" (Nietzsche 1967, 95).

To explicate this notion, Nietzsche used the mythic construct of the Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy. Dionysus was the god from whose dismembered parts the Olympian gods sprang and from whose tears sprang man. And in his existence as a dismembered god, Dionysus possessed the nature of both a cruel, barbarous demon and a gentle ruler. Thus through the fragmentation of the god came individuation or multiplicity. This process occurs in civilization in the form of increasingly complex divisions of labour and individual specializations. In this manner civilizations move away from the unity of the perfect whole or "truth" and toward greater fragmentation. The hope of reunion into the one perfect whole -- the vision of the perfect ideal -- remains contingent upon the rebirth of replete Dionysus. This view is analogous to that of the eastern philosophy of Buddhism which holds as its ideal the return of the individual to the All That Is. Nietzsche described

this hope when he wrote:

> This view of things already provides us with all the elements of a profound and pessimistic view of the world, together with the mystery doctrine of tragedy: the fundamental knowledge of the oneness of everything existent, the conception of individuation as the primal cause of evil, and of art as the joyous hope that the spell of individuation may be broken in augury of a restored oneness (Nietzsche 1967: 73 - 75).

Yet the Dionysian, as it exists in individuated form, continues to erupt and bubble forth as the creative aspect which defies reduction to the unified whole. The Dionysian aspect therefore represents process or becoming as expressed in dance and ritual.

The Apollonian half of the dichotomy represents the restraint of the Dionysian, the "cultural container" to which Mumford referred (Mumford 1966: 41, 50). The container is constituted by society with its various sub-systems such as politics and religion which impose order upon the Dionysian chaos. As mechanisms for the return to the unified whole, they represent the aesthetic -- the "being" towards which the indefatigible process of becoming, the Dionysian urge, must be bent.

The mythic paradigm used by Nietzsche, then, can be viewed in terms of the age-old opposition between Being (static essence) and Becoming (dynamic existence) that in traditional philosophy, and especially in the

existential philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have been the fundamental constructs for metaphysical or epistemological attitudes. More and more in the twentieth century, following the example of Nietzsche, the philosophical framework has been grounded in myth. Witness in particular the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus who, like Nietzsche, turned to Greek mythology for archetypal illustrations of contemporary situations, to show the ways in which contemporary issues and man's way of coping with them in a societal framework are inextricably bound up in constantly revitalized mythic patterns.

The distinction between essence and existence has been belaboured by modern philosophers to the point of cultism. Until very recently, for example, no self-respecting British philosopher would adjure the accusation that he was an existentialist; indeed Richard Hare took great pains to deny that his proposal to bridge the gap between "is" and "ought" was existential (Plant 1972: 92fn.), and existentialism was for decades touted as diametrically opposed to logical positivism, which assumed the pre-eminent essence of things (Sartre 1957: 14 - 15). Yet the essentialism/existentialism debate is an important one for any consideration of contemporary thought if only

because each position is in itself a mythic construct -- a way of explaining different observed realities.

The totality of knowledge about reality as conceived by a given society is embodied in its culture and the origin of that knowledge is a critical anthropological issue. And it is this issue which necessitates a pursuit of the implications of the essentialist/existentialist debate. Sartre made a major contribution by placing the origin of all cultural knowledge in man himself when he argued that the "atheistic existentialism" of which he was a proponent, holds that if there is no god to define, then man must define himself. In short, man, in existence, defines his own essence (Sartre 1957: 15). Sartre, therefore, maintains that the "starting point" for existentialism is "pure subjectivity, the Cartesian I Think" (Sartre 1957: 9). But the fact is that in Cartesian contemplation one can not be sure of the primacy of thought (cogito) or even of being (esse). The debate of the philosophers has been misplaced: the polarities of thought and the human situation should not have been "Being" as opposed to "Becoming", or "Essence" as opposed to "Existence", for each is a part of the other. It is impossible to conceive of an essence without an existence, as Sartre suggests; but it is just as impossible

to conceive of an existence without its having definition -- an essence.

There is, however, a unifying factor that lies both between and beyond both essence and existence, underlying and transcending them with far-reaching implications for the study of culture process -- a process which is in effect the essential existence of man. This pre-essential, pre-existential concept I shall call simply, "extension". Extension alone, in space and time, preceeds both existence and essence, and it does so in ways that are totally explicable within the Cartesian/Sartrean philosophical frame of reference. Is not thought itself a form of extension? Does it not extend in ways other than mere time? Indeed the capacity to extend oneself is the primary characteristic capability of man. In his very "being" he extends, in the process of "becoming" he extends in space and time; for change itself is a form of extension. Extension is precisely the meeting place of consciousness (Sartre's pour-soi) and the being of a physical, measurable thing (en-soi) Sartre 1956: ixv ff). The concept of extensionism transcends the plane of both essence and existence as they have been commonly understood in philosophical terms. Thus formulated, extensionism opens the door to understanding

dimensions hitherto explicable only in terms of metaphysical, psychological, religious or mythic realities. Everywhere we look, in everything we do, we are forced to recognize, even in simple mental exercise, the impinging nature of extensions and projections both outward and into the larger universe, and inwards to the centre of being. And surely herein lies the fundamental ingredient of myth. We delight in measuring the voids of the external universe in terms of the distance between objects within that universe -- of stars and galaxies, for example; and we measure the voids of the microcosmic universe -- the infinitudes that exist inwardly between the protons, neutrons and electrons -- in terms of replete <u>things</u> that we see and conceive of as measurable entities. These voids themselves are immeasurable, but we can still refer to them as extending inwards beyond the postulated center of being, the infinitissimal, or outwards beyond the immeasurable boundaries of infinity. We cannot conceive of the infinite void as being, neither can it be conceptualized as an essence, for we can never conceive of the infinite in terms of either traditional concept. The only thing we know definitely about infinity is that it <u>extends</u>. Furthermore, all knowledge consists of accumulated experience of human extension, and extension

-- the search in Lessing's terms -- is the human process which provides that knowledge.

The concept of extension also helps one comprehend the significance of the Apollonian and Dionysian principles in culture, as outlined by Nietzsche in The Birth of Tragedy. The essence in the Platonic sense represents the stasis of the ideal, whereas the existence represents the matrix or ground which strives to become. The becoming itself, however, occurs in the interstice between essence and existence in the process of being extending itself, through cultural mechanisms toward the attainment of the aesthetic ideal. It is also in the process of extending that morality enters the picture as the judgment of the efficacy of the process in meeting its goal. The goal or essence, in turn, is the mythic toward which the Dionysiac, ritually active principle, must aspire.

Extensionism (as opposed to existentialism or essentialism) provides a satisfactory framework for a discussion of myth because it encompasses not only the concepts of physical time and space but also socio-psychological interrelationships (the notion of self extending outwards to relate to others). The notion of extending to infinitude of value, or reaching out to the the "ultimate concern", as Paul Tillich puts it, is an important adjunct to the possibilities of

extensionism.[1] In Tillich's view, God is conceived to be the ultimate, infinite extension of man inward, rather than a nebulous external being remote from man. Similarly, Alan Watts, writing of eastern religious traditions, espoused a view which emphasizes the extension of divinity from the inner depths of human being. Watts prefers the eastern concept of man emanating from a god to the western image of man crawling around under the surveillance of a remote god, and the primary reason for his commitment to the eastern tradition is that "it includes all the noble and wonderful possibilities of tragedy, limitation and differentiation without, however, allowing them to overwhelm the ultimate and basic unity" (Watts 1973: 211 - 212). According to the Indian worldview supported by Watts, the universe extends outward from the center of being, wherein resides the Divine. All experience gained from such extension is then, in all human cultures, organized into categories which constitute the social sub-systems.

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1. Paul Tillich considers "God" in the following terms: "The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being is God. That depth is what the word God means. And if that word has not much meaning for you, translate it, and speak of the depths of your life, of the source of your being, of your ultimate concern, of what you take seriously without any reservation . . . . For if you know that God means depth, you know much about him. You cannot then call yourself an atheist or unbeliever. For you cannot think or say: Life has no depth! Life is shallow. Being itself is surface only. If you could say this in complete seriousness, you would be an atheist; but otherwise you are not. He who knows about depth knows about god (Tillich 1962: 63 - 64).

Of all the possible categories of experience, religion, art and philosophy stand out as those most inextricably mixed into the symbolic ordering principle or cultural paradigm. As such, these represent a restatement of the definition of the basic nature of man, the embodiment of specific cultural ideals springing from a given mythic reality. Thus the philosophy or culture myth of a society eventually becomes translated into cognitive and behavioral modes in its religious, artistic, philosophical and even political beliefs and rituals. In examining the mythic meaning embodied in the various social systems, the definition of "god" used by Paul Tillich is useful inasmuch as it moves us away from the anthropomorphized gods of the predominant contemporary western religions toward a more universally applicable "ultimate concern". The "ultimate concern" of man thus incorporates within it a basic definition of the nature of man as a part of the whole mythic structure. But mythic worlds do not spring full-blown into the lives of men. They are, as extensions of himself, his own creation. And because they embody a totality unparalleled by any other creation, myths, more than any other creation he undertakes, tax his imagination and creative powers to their limits.

Myth develops through extension from experience and imagination, and imagination in particular functions through play. Play here refers to the free manipulation of either concrete material or thought, or both. Play is both a mirror for a given reality or cultural paradigm which provides information about that reality upon which man can comment or attempt to institute change or transformation. As such, play is a form of experimentation. It is both a testing of the novel and a reviewing of the old. It is both constructive and critical. It is not serious in one sense because we are not immediately committed to the creations of play, yet it is serious to the extent that it is to one or several of the creations to which we must become committed eventually as we strive to realize our potential extension. In this sense we are constantly creating a new cultural reality in an ongoing process, rather than in a single "act of creation", and the amorphous, symbolic mythic structure represents both the realized reality and the total potential. Viewed from this angle, history -- man's extension through time -- is the working out of the myth, and accumulative experience of history is limited only by the mythic reality which structures all acts of extension. The confines of the myth appear as symbolic constructs which transcend the

mundane. It was to these amorphous symbols that Cassirer alluded when he noted that we do not live exclusively in our commonplace reality of physical things or wholly within an individual sphere, but also partly in a realm of plastic, musical and poetical forms which extends beyond both the physical and psychological spheres into a symbolic sphere of real universality (Cassirer 1944: 145).

In the contemporary western world, man has become committed to the concept of one single reality. But as early as 1941, Benjamin Lee Whorf, in his Language, Mind and Reality, spoke of a "culture of consciousness" which would lead western man out of his narrow perspective of reality to a realization of his potential. Using the terminology of the philosophies of India and of modern Theosophy, he spoke of the two great levels on the plane of Manas (the plane of the mind, of psychic being, of total symbolic processes), the Nāma/Rūpa level ("the realm of name and form"), and the Arūpa level. The former is the level of vocabulary and shape segmentation, and is not self-sufficient, but dependent upon the latter, the Arūpa level, "the level at which its combinatory scheme appears". Arūpa (formlessness) "is a realm of patterns that can be actualized in space and time in the materials of lower planes, but are themselves indifferent to space

and time" (Whorf 1944: 253). The patterns that appear are not like lexical or formal meanings but are like units of meaning which appear in clusters of sentences. Meaning, to Whorf, lies in the larger patterns, not in the individual Nāma/Rūpa components of those patterns. It is precisely those larger, non-formal and non-linguistic, patterns which, in his view have universality. It is equally this Arūpa patterning level which may, via the "culture of consciousness", eventually be contacted directly by those whose consciousness has been sufficiently expanded (Whorf 1944: 253 - 254). When the potential is realized, the extension process may once more carry us toward new experiences.

Two directions in thought emerge from the philosophical apprehension of the underlying, yet overridingly important, patterning concept introduced by Whorf. First, it serves to indicate that the further man goes in the segmentation and categorization of his universe, and the more sophisticated and "logical" his reality becomes, the further away he draws from what could be called "the ground of his being". The obverse of this is the implication that our usual model of social evolution -- from savage hunter/gatherer to urban sophisticate -- may very well be totally false. This is the point Heidegger

attempted to make in his comments about the beginning of human culture being the strongest and mightiest (Mehta 1971: 155). The second direction suggested by Whorf's patterning concept lies in the re-awakening of the understanding of the spiritual nature of man. It is unfortunate, at this point, that Heidegger's use of the word geist cannot be adequately translated into English. To use the word "spirit" as a gloss adds some unfortunate, if not often consciously perceived, connotations. When Heidegger uses the term, he means not a combination of, but rather a fusion of mind and psyche, and he includes in this man's abilities to perceive, to symbolize, to create, to feel, and to actualize potential. Rejecting the validity of the concept of "spirit as utilitarian intelligence", he stated emphatically:

> Spifit is neither empty cleverness nor the irresponsible play of the wit, nor the boundless work of dismemberment carried on by the practical intelligence; much less is it world-reason; no, spirit is a fundamental, knowing resolve toward the essence of being (Mehta 1971: 49).

Geist, to Heidegger, is "the sustaining, dominating principle, the first and last, not merely an indispensible third factor" -- "not a tool in the service of others". Geist, is in short that most fundamental quality of man which extends. The "world-creating impulse" of the spirit is destroyed by philosophies and theories which limit the

areas of valid inquiry into causes, which make man conform to one, narrow, standardized "reality", which degrades poetry, art, religion and politics alike, for it hampers their true extension as compellingly creative, original experiences to be acquired in acts of self-affirmation (Heidegger's Da-sein, "Being-there").

It would be helpful at this point if Heidegger's Geist could be translated loosely as "myth" even though "myth" itself is fraught with similar ambiguities. In fact it may be precisely falsification of the concept of Geist in its translation as "spirit" rather than as "myth" which has led to the historic and current misconceptions -- especially in the English-speaking world -- regarding the nature of art. If "spirit" is a tool of the intelligence rather than the mythic essence in which it is based, then art becomes nothing more than a mechanism by which we uphold and validate our very narrow reality. It becomes a wall around that reality rather than a doorway into another -- or many others, as many others as there are separate cultural myths. As Don Juan points out to Castaneda on several occasions, we sustain and constantly re-create our world through our internal dialogue; art is the artist's internal dialogue with himself, that is, with the mythic constructs of his Being, made visible and

concrete. And this "world", the world of tonal in Don Juan's terms is more than just the spheres of the Nāma and Rūpa, of symbols and shapes, but includes all those abstract concepts that delineate the areas of the possible within our reality; "the tonal makes the world because it witnesses and assesses it according to tonal rules" (Castaneda 1974: 124 - 125). In other words, the tonal makes up the rules by which it apprehends the world.

But in Don Juan's cosmology, the tonal is only half of an essentially inseparable, true pair: the other half is the nagual, which, by his definition is simply that which lies beyond the tonal, "there, where power hovers" (Castaneda 1974: 172). For the individual the tonal is finite, beginning at birth and ending at death: it is the realized extension of being. The nagual, on the other hand, has no such limits. It is not experience or intuition or consciousness, yet it accounts for creativity. In fact, says Don Juan, "the nagual is the only part of us that can create"(Castaneda 1974: 141). This would seem to echo Heidegger's concept of Geist as the essence in which being is based; it appears to be a so-called primitive perception of a truth that so-called civilized philosophy took many life-times to arrive at,

and yet which states the concept of potential being -- of extension beyond our dialogue-created reality -- more clearly and precisely than western philosophy has been able to do.

Until fairly recently (during the last thirty years or so) only rarely did such a concept as that of a thought-created reality crop up at all in western thought, and then it was usually either peripheral to the concept (like Jung's "collective unconscious") or disguised as poetry, fantasy or "way-out" theology (as in Swedenborgianism). One pivotal paper though, first published in 1945, not only pointed out the essential unreality of commonly agreed-upon reality, but more importantly, spoke of "finite provinces of meaning upon which we may bestow the accent of reality". Schutz, in this very brief but superbly lucid paper, suggested that "it is the meaning of our experiences and not the ontological structure of the objects which constitutes reality" (Schutz 1945: 288). Each finite province of meaning has its own specific (and internally consistent) cognitive style, and those of our experiences that are congruent with this style then in turn validate for us the reality of this province of meaning.

Schutz continued that the rather circular process in which cognitive style and congruent experience are each both cause and effect for the other, has trapped man not in a groove, but a rut -- so deep a rut that it takes a substantial shock to lift him out. Once he has been shocked out of it though, it soon becomes apparent to him that, as David Young suggests:

> Instead of one reality surrounded by varying degrees of illusion, there are multiple realities, all of which may be illusory if judged from some (hypothetical) objective ontological stance (popularly known as God's point of view). If all humanly constructed realities are equally illusory, it is also true that no reality is more illusory than another (Young 1975: 9, unpublished paper).

In brief, according to Young, "art offers an outside vantage point from which the individual can reflect upon and thus evaluate everyday reality" (Young 1975: 9). Art is thus one mechanism for extension which exhibits clearly the reflective as well as generative nature of extension. And at this level, as play with thought and form, such extension is possible even if one fully intends to maintain his everyday reality as a permanent and firmly established "home base" with only occasional forays into alternative realities for the purpose of gaining different or novel perspectives on one's "home" reality.

On the other hand, art, rather than being a tool used for the acquisition of perspective, can be a passport into a totally new mythic reality, for it can not only provide the new insight necessary and/or the shock to power the creation of a newly perceived reality, but by giving substantive form to it, can sustain that new reality as a legitimate belief system. This is not to suggest a permanent flight into fantasy, but the actual creation, through extension of human perception and reason, of a functional worldview or mythic paradigm.

Art represents but one cultural mechanism through the use of which man can experience a far wider scope of being than his narrow physical, three-dimensional reality. Why is it then that so few members of each generation get more than a fleeting -- in fact, often unperceived -- glimpse of this wider scope? Jane Roberts, in The Eternal Validity of the Soul, suggests that this is a result of an individual's belief that the physical reality he perceives is the only valid one; so it never occurs to that individual to look for other possible realities. Furthermore, it is not that one is essentially divorced from these other streams of consciousness in any radical sense; but rather that his focus of attention closes him off from them. The point is that one is only

limited to the reality one knows if one believes that that reality is the only valid one (Roberts 1972: 108 - 109). Thus Roberts is cautioning that by unquestioning adherence to any system man can deny his own extension and continued growth. And in denying continuing extension man relinquishes the search into the nature of his own Being.

Roberts also suggests, by implication, that artists, or more generally creative individuals who focus their attention on developments in any other cultural subsystem such as religion or politics, are persons who, being themselves more aware of their own multidimensional inner self, can give concrete expression to their perceptions and in that confront others with the possibility of sharing in a new multidimensionality of being. Thus in Robert's view,

> Any creative work involves you in a cooperative process in which you learn to dip into these other streams of consciousness, and come up with a perception that has far more dimensions than one arising from the one narrow, usual stream of consciousness that you know. Great creativity is then multidimensional for this reason. Its origin is not from one reality, but from many, and it is tinged with the multiplicity of that origin (Roberts 1972: 109).

Thus the perception of multidimensional or transmythic reality on the part of the author, the politician, the theologian, the scientist, the philosopher or the artist, translated into law, literature, or the plastic arts will

provide the hearer or viewer with sufficient clues to create the shock that opens the way to a new reality. Only if the viewer is so deeply immersed in this reality that he ignores or discounts those clues that are incompatible with his everyday experience, will the opportunity for extension remain closed to him.

Roberts' concept of the inner, multidimensional self is formulated, in a slightly different way, by Robert Assagioli, a psychologist relatively little-known until recent years. His investigations into what appeared to him to be another "basic psychological need" for many people, the need for "transcendence", led him to develop a model of the human personality in which he posits a transpersonal self, a self at the core of the total personality. The transpersonal self -- analogous to Roberts' "inner self" -- has the personal self, the I, as its counterpart in the human personality. This personal self is expressed in the will, and through the will acts on the other psychological functions (e.g. intuition, sensation, desire, thought, etc.). But according to Assagioli, many people seem to have voluntarily submitted to a "spiritual lobotomy" inasmuch as they repress the sublime and completely deny the transpersonal self. Consequently, few people "know" their own higher consciousness. One

factor which has contributed to this denial is the adoption of the popular Freudian psychological stance which promotes a degraded self-image by advancing the idea that all religious or spiritual impulses are sublimations of crude sexual instincts. What this position ignores is the fact that many of the world's most creative people throughout human history have reported experiences of a transpersonal nature. Despite the fact that, in his view, spiritual drives are "no less real, basic or fundamental" than any other human drives, they are too often sublimated because of man's fear of commitment, particularly since "direct experience of the transpersonal self is rare and union with it is very rare". Yet many people do have a knowledge of it which is mediated through the superconsciousness; witness the works of creative geniuses such as Plato, Dante and Einstein. Another means to access to the superpersonal is prayer or meditation (Keen 1974: 105). The transpersonal self of Assagioli's model is analogous to Carl Rogers' concept of "subjective" thought and reflection. He posits at the base of all human creativity a form of pre-conceptual thought which might be called an "unknown knowingness". This type of thought, according to Rogers, involves the formation of "inner hypotheses"

which are tested through reference to the inward flow of experiencing in our subjective interaction with both internal and external events. This type of knowing is fundamental to everyday living for it is against this, and not against the external situation, which we check, sharpen and further differentiate the conceptual hypotheses we form. This form of knowing which is a deeply rooted organismic sensing is largely ignored today because it does not lead immediately to publicly validated knowledge; yet it is from this form of knowing that we "form and differentiate our conscious symbolizations and conceptions". This type of knowing has been ignored, in part at least, because of its apparent opposition to the empirical essence of modern scientific research; but as Rogers notes, "even the most rigorous science has its origin in this mode of knowing". Thus he concludes, "Science always has its beginning as inner subjective hypothesis, highly valued by the investigator because it makes patterned sense out of his experiencing (Rogers 1970: 4).

In this chapter we have seen that a new paradigm for myth in its creative aspect is developing, a paradigm which places at the core of man's total being an inner, transcending or transpersonal self which exists in a truly

multidimensional context and provides the motive power for all his creative impulses which are in turn realized through the extension of his Being into creative forms. Thus it can be seen that the "inspiration" for both artistic and religious expression springs from the same source, which because of its very multidimensional nature, can imbue language, art and religion with the capacity for opening the way to at least the experience, and perhaps the formation, of new and very different mythic superstructures for cultural realities.

CHAPTER V

"MYTH" AS AN OPERATIONAL CONSTRUCT

Chapters Two through Four have dealt with the various aspects of myth as they relate to human ontological development in the creation of ordering principles for society which persist in the mythic superstructure as man's fundamental referent in his struggle to exist humanly. In this chapter we shall endeavor to establish an operational framework within which all aspects of myth can be synthesized in order to create a theoretical framework for the investigation of the relationships between mythic and social categories and the social behaviour which strives to function within those categories illustrated in the diagram on page 11 as philosophy, religion, politics, art and science. (This list by no means exhausts all the social categories.)

The concept of social mechanisms as a means to achieving the end goals of the "ultimate concern", or in Paul Tillich's terms the process of transforming the potential into the actual (Tillich 1952: 93), can be operationalized in terms of the sophisticated theory

of magick[1] formulated by Aleister Crowley. He began his book, Magick in Theory and Practice, with the following Postulate: "Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with will" (Crowley [undated]: xii). "Will", as used here by Crowley, relates back to will as conceived by Nietzsche in his concept of the "will to power". This use of the term "will" was cogently explained by Paul Tillich in The Courage To Be when he wrote that Neitzsche's will to power was neither will in the psychological sense nor power in the sociological sense; but rather the self-affirmation of life as life which includes the drive for self-preservation and growth. Conceived of in this fashion, will does not strive for something it does not have, that is for some object outside itself, but wills itself in the double sense of preserving and transcending. In this sense, will to power is the self-affirmation of the will as ultimate reality (Tillich 1962: 36).

The will thus defined acts in accordance with the second Postulate put forth by Crowley: "Any required

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1. Crowley uses the spelling "magick" to distinguish actions aimed at serious transformation or metamorphosis as opposed to the sleight-of-hand "magic" of the stage magician performed for entertainment and illusion only.

Change may be effected by application of the proper kind and degree of Force in the proper manner through the proper medium to the proper object"(Crowley [undated]: xiii). Crowley's programme for willed action as set out in his second postulate contains the four major aspects of social action which must be accounted for in a study of culture process. First, his "desired change" represents the ideal toward which social action strives. Second, "the proper kind and degree of force" refers to recognized patterns of action which could be the application of scientific principles to alter technology or the institution of a political platform to achieve social reform, for example. "The proper manner through the proper medium" which constitutes Crowley's third point contains both practical and ethical connotations for culture process -- the casting of a ballot as opposed to the setting of a bomb as an approach to political process, for example. And finally, the choice of a "proper object" for creating a desired change is analogous to the determination of the appropriate aspect or sub-system of culture to be subjected to change. Thus every act, if it is an intentional act, is a "magickal" act. The act of magick itself represents practical action or extension toward the mythic which embodies all the aspects of Crowley's second postulate for

it defines goals, means, values and the categories of objects or concepts for change. The mythic grounding which contains all these aspects is, as discussed in the last chapter, the ground from which Being itself extends. As such it consists of the accumulated experience of extension coupled with visions -- extensions of yet unrealized possibilities. This formulation is implicit in Crowley's Theorem 14:

> Man is capable of being, and using, anything which he perceives, for everything that he perceives is in a certain sense a part of his being. He may thus subjugate the whole Universe of which he is conscious to his individual Will (Crowley [undated]: xvii).

The true "magician" is however, a solitary practitioner analogous to Kierkegaard's "Single One", the one who stands apart from the mass in the process of extending his own being. Martin Buber in his book, Between Man & Man, discussed the nature of the "Single One" as conceived by Kierkegaard. Buber noted that for Kierkegaard the "crowd" represented "untruth" while the "Single One" represented "truth" and that no one was prevented from becoming a "Single One" except he who chose to exclude himself by wanting to be "crowd". In this sense the "Single One" represents the category of "spirit" in general and of spiritual awakening and revival in particular. In these terms spirit is as sharply opposed to politics as possible

(Buber 1947: 81). To espouse a stance which promotes the role of the individual so vociferously would appear to be counter-productive to theories, such as Durkheim's, which posit society as the primary referent for being. Buber was aware that Kierkegaard's own writing contained this contradiction or paradox and used the following quotations to illustrate the point:

> "He who communicates it [the truth] is only a Single One. And then its communication is again only for the Single One; for this view of life, "the Single One , is the very truth". Not that the Single One exists and not that he should exist is described as the truth, but "this view of life", which is hence also simply identified with him [sic]. To be the Single One is the communication of the truth, that is, the human truth. "The crowd" says Kierkegaard, "produces positions of advantage in human life", which "overlook in time and the world the eternal truth -- the Single One (Buber 1947: 68).

However, a careful reading of both Kierkegaard and Durkheim indicates that the contradiction between the individual and society as grounds of being is more apparent than real. In fact, what Kierkegaard is saying when he writes that the crowd or society produces positions of advantage is that the socially crystallized aspects of the myth expressed in the various sub-systems of society represent the stasis --that conservative quality of man which seeks to maintain the status quo and resist change. This aspect of social systems relates to Keen's concern, expressed in his paper

on Assagioli, that while man strives to develop and differentiate experience he also fears the unknown, that which has not been experienced. Mythically, the same propensity in man was illustrated through Oedipus. He sought to extend by destroying and denying his own history; he then married his own mother thereby returning to his own origins or that which was known already. Thus, the categorized knowledge contained in the social sub-systems defines achieved extension which is but a possible subset of possible extension. The role of the "Single One" is to utilize the dionysiac urge to extend by exploring beyond the achieved into the potential extension of the broader mythic matrix.

The key to the problem of the roles of the individual and society lies in the fact that extension beyond the realized into the potential does not occur in a vacuum: society remains the eternal referent, the "ever-present cause" to which the extension of the individual being "reacts". The parameters within which one can extend are therefore not truly infinite, for the range of extension is confined between the perimeters of the concrete reality and the perceived potential as noted by Crowley (Crowley [undated]: xvii). Durkheim was aware of this limitation on the individual being when he wrote that the existence

of individual cults implied nothing which contradicted the sociological interpretation of religion because cults consisted only in individualized forms of the collective forces. "Therefore," he concluded, "even when religion seems to be entirely within the individual conscience, it is still in society that it finds the living source from which it is nourished" (Durkheim 1915: 425).

In turn, the individuated or dionysiac extensions of the individual provide the dynamics for culture process. As extension assimilates new experiences in the dionysian search, alternative modes of action enter the "cultural container" of society. The true catalyst which instigates culture process is, as Kierkegaard noted, communication. Metaphorically speaking, communication as a catalyst transforms the new perceptions from a state of cultural <u>suspension</u> into a state of <u>solution</u>, thereby assimilating those perceptions into the ground of being itself. This <u>reaction</u> in cultural terms was described by Buber in terms of political transformations:

> Right order is direction and form in the political realm. But these two concepts must not be allowed to petrify. They have their truth only from the conception of the homogeneous <u>dynamic of order</u> which is the real principle of the political. The true history of a commonwealth must be understood as its striving to reach the order suited to it. This striving,

> this wrestling for the realization of true order -- wrestling between ideas, plans, outlines of true order that are so different, but also a wrestling that is simultaneously common to them all, not known, not to be expressed --- constitutes the political structure's dynamic order. An order is gained and established again and again as a result (Buber 1947: 99).

Without the purveyors of perceived potentials to feed conceptual possibilities into the societal cauldron there would be no culture process. Such a state of stagnation is reached, theoretically, when the denial of extension results in a perception of the potential and the realized as synonymous. When this occurs, a state of absolute "collectivism" exists which marks the beginning of paralysis in the human search for truth. There is, therefore, a need for people who have not been collectivized and of truth which is not politicized if man is to continue to develop ontologically (Buber 1947: 107). Those people capable of achieving this are those possessed of an urge to search or extend beyond the realized to the potential in the creative growth of being to be expressed in social configurations. This must not be taken to mean that each new symbolic construct created will be accepted by the total community if at all. In fact, there is rarely a community which is able to express what it considers to be right or wrong in a given situation in a unified and

unambiguous way. A community usually consists of more or less visible groups, which all yield various interpretations of destiny and which are utterly different yet all claim absolute authenticity. Each declares to know what is best for the community and each claims the unreserved complicity of the individual in the name of that community (Buber 1947: 90). Implicit in this view of community is the fact that culture process does not occur without the cognizance of a society's members. Choice is demanded and choice is a conscious activity. Furthermore, because there are alternative patterns to choose from there is also implicit a "struggle" among the proponents of various interest groups to promote their own approach to development. The concerns of the various "interest groups" which are created around different symbolic ordering systems derived from extension into the realm of the potential, are all aimed at achieving the "good society", but their actions must be tempered by responsibility, for as Buber stated: "History is not a sequence of conquests of power and actions of power but the context of the responsibilities of power in time" (Buber 1947: 97). The responsible act could be defined in terms of Crowley's postulate; that is, an act which applies the appropriate force in a proper manner through

the proper medium to the proper end (Crowley [undated]: xii). And the "proper medium" is a social category, be it a political party, a religious institution or an interest group created to bring pressure to bear upon a political party or church. All social categories of behaviour as modes of action are thus aimed at the creation of the "good society", a continuing process which depends upon the communication of visions extracted from the mythic potential. And in order to understand the nature of the relationship between the "vision" of the "good society" and "social action" directed toward its achievement, the articulating factor, communication must be considered.

Rollo May, in his book Power and Innocence: A Search for the Sources of Violence, explored the importance of communication in society:

> Language arises from an underlying web of potentiality for understanding, an empathetic tie between people, a shared structure, a capacity to identify with another. This potentiality for understanding is much more than mere words: it implies a state of we-ness, a bond that potentially unites people, the prototype for which are the facts of gestation in the mother's womb and then the process of birth. From this dialectical bond with others, into and out of which we can move, there has evolved in profound and complex ways over the centuries the capacity for language. The individual is both bound to others and independent from them at the same time. Out of this double nature of man are born the symbols and myths which

> are the basis of language and serve as a bridge over the chasm between human beings to establish the bond again (May 1972: 67).

Communication of the collective vision for society is therefore vital if the myth is to remain viable, for when the bond between human beings is destroyed to such an extent that communication stops aggression and violence occur. Aggression and violence are the outcome of communication breakdown not only because the unifying principles of a society can no longer be communicated, but also because loss of communication strikes at the ground of individual being as well. The manner in which this occurs becomes evident if we once more consider, as Rollo May did, that the Nietzschian will to power is "neither 'will' nor 'power' in the competitive sense of the modern day, but rather self-actualization" (May 1972: 20). And power and the sense of significance which comes from self-actualization are intertwined: "One is the objective form and the other the subjective form of the same experience" (May 1972: 35). Communication, in turn, is power. Therefore, if communication is blocked, power is lost, a point expounded by Harry Stack Sullivan who argued that the feeling of power in the sense of having influence in interpersonal relationships with significant others is crucial for the maintainance of self-esteem and the

continued growth of being (May 1972: 36). Traditionally, the communication involved in self-affirmation takes place within the confines of the "community", simply defined by May as a group in which free conversation can take place. "Community is where I can share my innermost thoughts, bring out the depths of my own feelings, and know they will be understood"(May 1972: 247). Thus being is both experienced and expressed through communication. But when an age is in the throes of a major transition of ordering principles or "mythic vision", language is the first thing to disintegrate. When language breaks down the language itself is subject to suspicion with the concomitant result of personal and interpersonal impoverishment. When this happens people suffer the despair of not being able to distinguish for themselves what they feel and are. And underlying the loss of identity is the loss of cogency of symbols and myths upon which both language and identity are based (May 1972: 66).

In his book, The Myth of the State, Ernst Cassirer explored the role of language in the maintenance of the mythic superstructure or ordering principles of society. In his consideration he took into account the fact that political myths depend upon a specific use of

language, and described his perceptions. He noted that the development of human speech fulfils two entirely different functions in the history of civilization. He called these two functions the "semantic" and the "magical", and asserted that if either function were missing there could be no human speech. However, the magical quality of the word does tend to dominate in primitive societies. In this case the word is used, not to describe things or the relationships between things, but rather, to produce effects and to change the course of nature. This point was of particular interest to Cassirer because he could see the tendency for the magical predominance of the word to recur in the modern world. In the rhetoric of modern political myths the magical facet of the word has come to dominate the semantic. In his own readings, Cassirer found that the transformation had been so radical that if he were to read a book published after 1935 in the German language, he could no longer understand that language. This has occurred not only from the coining of new words but also from a profound change in the meaning of many old words. The change of meaning occurred because "those words which formerly were used in a descriptive, logical, or semantic sense are now used as magic words that are destined to produce certain effects and to

stir up certain emotions" (Cassirer 1945: 281 - 282). Ordinarily, we think of words as being charged with meaning, but when the magical quality dominates the words are charged with feeling and violent passion. Myth, therefore, as communicated through the artifices of human speech, is not only a didactic appeal to human reason but also an appeal to deep-seated emotions. Thus the frustrations pent up from a blockage of communication in one direction can erupt through other channels if these become open to the individual. While in extreme cases, as May indicates, the eruption may be in terms of overt violence, it can also be sublimated into the language or "jargonese" of the social sub-systems. The violent quality of the language of millennarian movements illustrates this point. The creation in such movements of a set of new categories to which their adherents can relate within the context of a religious community provides a channel for the expression of disillusionment with the larger societal myth with its replete store of values and behaviour patterns. In effect, each such organization represents the creation of a "sub-myth", for each is a direct "reaction" to the totality of values and activities of the larger society. This phenomenon is reminiscent of

Schutz' provinces of meaning with each mythic subset representing one possible system for categorizing the various components of culture.

The basic problem of meaningful relationships between mythic components and social relationships was explored by Harvey Cox and T. George Harris in Mystery, Magic and Miracle: Religion in a Post-Aquarian Age. Their discussion concerned the generation of or extension toward a new myth in the form of a new system of categories in the search for meaning. The basic content of their dialogue revolves around the growth of interest in "irrational" systems such as astrology. When Harris asked Cox what he thought of the search for interhuman relationships based on compatible zodiac signs, Cox replied that he thought it represented the rejection of social categories which had become both rigid and outdated. Because the astrological symbols are general purpose they can be used to develop a range of relationships.[1]

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1. The following constitutes the core of the conversation: "Do you know what people are saying when they ask you your sign? They are saying I want to relate to you, to be intimate with you in this kooky, interesting, groovy way -- a way that is going to blow the minds of those goddammed rationalists. The people who have organized our society have defined us into categories that we can't live in. So along comes this absolutely weird group of categories unrelated to social status or anything else. It's such an intricate and general-purpose set of symbols you can use it to build whatever relationship you want (Heenan 1973: 15).

The nebulous, all-purpose set of categories to which Cox refers is reminiscent of Whorf's Arūpa in the sense that its lack of definition gives it the quality of formlessness and indifference to time and space. The adoption of such a non-formal set of categories is also what Whorf expected to see at the beginning of a period of renewed spiritual growth in the western world -- his envisioned "culture of consciousness" (Whorf 1944: 253 - 254).

In other terms, the interest in non-specific categories, especially as they represent a reaction against too highly specific categories, indicates a renewed burst of creativity from the Dionysian principle long latent in the highly bureaucratized countries of North America. In fact, the tight, bureaucratic society we have achieved was won at the expense of repressing the Dionysian aspect of man. In short, our production- and efficiency-oriented society cannot accommodate the absurd, the inspiring, the uncanny, the awesome, the terrifying, or the ecstatic propensities of man. Whenever they erupt they are immediately suppressed either by force or by some brand-name therapy. The mythic vision of the western world as it relates to the basic nature of man has tried to define these latter qualities out of man altogether. Our definition of man is such that, as Cox suggested, "Having

systematically stunted the Dionysian side of the whole human, we assume that man is naturally just a reliable, plane-catching Apollonian"(Heenan 1973: 18).

The extensions of man aimed at transcending the limitations of the rationalist world are expressed in such phenomena as the theatre of Antonin Artaud. The highly sensual aspects of Artaud's theatre of the cruel literally "shock" the audience into taking cognizance of the fact that there are experiences of which they are capable beyond the realm of their own sphere of extension. One aspect of man's potential which has been denied contemporary North American society is that of the sensual and festive. And religion has sufferred because the direct experience of festivity and celebration has been denied except as it is strictly controlled in the secularized and vulgarized form of organized sport such as football and hockey. The religious sphere used to provide an outlet for man's festive spirit, but as Cox noted, "We are allowed to feel it only through careful study of the people who first experienced it long, long ago" (Heenan 1973: 21).

We are on the verge of recapturing festivity and play as evidenced in the popularity of a new genre of literature which includes Tolkien's The Hobbit and Carlos

Castaneda's quartet, The Teachings of Don Juan, A Separate Reality, Journey to Ixtlan and Tales of Power. The infatuation with such material indicates a need to experiment with "nonrational" modalities which extend far beyond the sphere of the larger societal myth. While much of contemporary fantastic literature is not taken seriously in any scholarly sense, it is serious to the extent that it affords an opportunity to play with novel concepts which cannot be found in the realized extension of being embodied in society. It thus affords an opportunity to expand human consciousness and entertain novel ways of categorizing the social experience. When social experiments are articulated in pop-art, rock masses and Beatles' music, they do not represent "passing fads" so much as opportunities for the extension of experience. The cumulative effect of such experiments can be seen in the sequence of contemporary rock operas. The precursor to the actual operas was the Beatles' Sgt. Pepper album. Hair and Tommy, the first of the true operas, were billed as celebrations -- a fact noted by virtually all of the critics. What was not as obvious was the critical aspect of celebration. In his book, The Feast of Fools, Harvey Cox only hinted at this function of celebration, while he dwelt at length upon the opportunity

for experimentation and fantasy. What he did note is that celebrations are events in which the social propriety -- the accepted category of values -- is set on end. Men and women dress cross-sexually and those of socially low status openly mock those of high status, including their political and religious leaders (Cox 1969: 2).

Hair epitomizes the critical quality of the Dionysian celebration. The anti-hero, Claude Hooper Bukowski struggles to submerge himself in a "counter-culture". But his rebellion is futile and he is ultimately chuffed off to die in the Vietnam meat-grinder. His "group" is shattered and the play very literally ends in despair. Claude is defeated because he forsakes the struggle to emerge from the crowd, to become in a Kierkegaardian sense, a "Single One". Jesus Christ Superstar explores the possibilities of celebration more successfully, perhaps because its hero is indeed a "Single One". The hero --Christ -- is not the insipid, anemic Christ of traditional Christianity but Christ the Harlequin. Commenting on the emergence of this motif, Cox noted that the figure of Christ is now ubiquitous and almost without exception the figure is that of Christ as the Harlequin. Cox believes

this aspect of Christ to be the most valid one inasmuch as Christ was "part Yippie and part revolutionary and part something else". He then reminded his reader that on his day of earthly triumph Christ rode into town on a jackass and in early iconography was depicted as having the head of an ass himself. Cox explained, in part, the contemporary emergence of Christ the Harlequin when he wrote: "A weak, even ridiculous church somehow peculiarly at odds with the ruling assumption of its day can once again appreciate the harlequinesque Christ" (Heenan 1973: 28). Christ the Harlequin stands out most clearly in a powerful, symbolically inverted scene with Herod. Herod and his harem are physically attired as the jesters and act out a ludicrous ritual dance. Christ stands quietly, attired in a plain white robe. The audience, identifying with Christ and his transcendental ideals, at that moment is immediately placed in opposition to the crowd. In spite of the dress and behaviour of Herod and his troupe, the audience, like Christ, stands apart from the group representing an extant value system. Christ is still the "fool" -- the "Single One" -- because he stands apart from the crowd and dies for his position. The image of Christ is important as a symbol of the incipient cultural transformation in North America

for he is, in fact, the man who dares to defy an existing mythic vision in order to transcend it and aspire toward another system with a different set of ordering principles.

The road to mythic transformation is, however, not a smooth one. Like Christ, one makes enemies by isolating himself both conceptually and in practice from the larger social group. Yet even the enemy plays an important and constructive role in the ontological extension of the community. The distinction between "friend" and "enemy" is a mechanism for establishing the outer perimeters of the community.[1] "Enemy" is a category endemic to all human communities because it is a part of the definition of parameters which establish the "I" and "Thou". While this distinction is usually conceived of as it relates to the individual, in a

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1. Rollo May discussed the enemy as follows: I need my enemy in my community. He keeps me alert, vital. I need his criticism. Strange to say, I need him to posit myself against. Lessing once said: "I would walk twenty miles to see my worst enemy if I could learn anything from him". But beyond what we specifically learn from our enemies, we need them emotionally: our psychic economy cannot get along well without them. Persons often remark that, curiously to them, they feel a singular emptiness when their enemy dies or is incapacitated. All of which indicates that our enemy is as necessary for us as our friends. Both together are part of authentic community (May 1972: 428).

community it is more specifically conceived of as "Mine" and "Thine". As a defining category it serves to denote those who share a true communication in their mutual acceptance of one myth or mythic subset as opposed to those who do not. This category, referred to by Carl Schmitt as "Friend and Foe", is not a normative concept of being but rather a concept of an attitude within a situation (Buber 1947: 99). The enemy therefore has two important implications for the study of culture process. First it defines that toward which one does not seek to extend his being, either as an individual or as a member of society.

The concepts Friend and Foe also involve the notion of "belief". The friend is one with whom the individual can communicate about mutual concerns within a common framework for understanding his universe. Within this context "ideology" refers to "a more or less institutionalized set of beliefs" (Rokeach 1960: 35). When the institutionalized set of beliefs becomes entrenched in a social body such as a political party or a church with the authority invested in these organizations, they constitute dogma, the most highly specific and concretized expressions of myth.

In summary, myth is a set of all symbolic categories held in common by society or a group within a society which defines a) areas of required change, b) the kind and degree of force which is legitimate to effect the change, c) the channels through which change is to be effected, and d) the sub-category of the social matrix which is to be subjected to alteration to achieve the change. This represents for the society or group the process in which the will acts as it strives to achieve the mythic vision through the mechanisms of the social sub-systems. Any act which is an intentional act may or may not achieve the desired effect, depending upon whether or nor it conforms to prescribed, legitimate means for instigating change. All intentional acts are acts of extension into the realm of potential; all such acts are aimed at self-actualization. Self-actualization can occur, however, only if it can be communicated and hence verified within the context of the social setting. The realized extension of the myth represents the Apollonian aspect of man in that it defines and constrains. The Dionysian aspect of man is experienced in action which extends beyond the established into the potential in the form of action which is not dictated by the extant set of value categories. However, the Dionysian must itself be constrained and directed

toward the realization of goals as yet not assimilated within the parameters of the social reality. The sub-systems of society represent unique categories or spheres of action within which the individual and his community can strive to extend themselves toward the realization of the "good society". When competing categories appear (as they do when disparate political parties or religious institutions appear together), the individual must make a choice as to which one communicates most effectively with him in his own personal search for meaning in life and for the "good society". Those groups which do not represent the interests of an individual's own developmental goals become isolated conceptually as enemy groups.

The need to communicate is a human imperative, and so even when the categorical delimiters have been drawn between opposing groups, the hope of communication is never lost. For even if one does not wish to extend toward another in the sense of developing one's own ontological growth of being in that particular direction, one hopes to communicate his own aspirations. Often it transpires under these circumstances that a consensus or compromise can be reached which extends yet another ordering system over a larger segment of the population. When communication

between rival groups ceases with each retaining its own belief system embodied in a social institution with a recognized sphere of authority, the belief system becomes dogma. By examining the activities of people within sub-groups in society from this perspective, it is hoped that one may arrive at a more organic and intellectual vision of the phenomenon of culture. This chapter has therefore outlined a network of relationships which follow through from the most fundamental forms of extension from the ground of individual being to the systematization of those extensions in social institutions. From this perspective one will be better able to comprehend the relationship between man's intellectual endeavors and his ever-changing social reality.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

There is a growing intellectual trend towards accepting both myth and its religious sub-systems as expressions of the human condition in general as perceived by the adherent social unit. Viewed in this way, myth embodies concepts which define the basic nature of man and his place within the perceived universe. Myth also involves the culture history of a group as well as a realm of yet undifferentiated symbolic modalities from which new ordering principles may be extrapolated and systematized into the categories of human knowledge. The process in which this transformation occurs emanates from the ground of individual being.

Within each culture there are a number of creative and perceptive individuals who formulate hypotheses concerning the potential for cultural development -- individuals who stand apart as "Single Ones" in their search for "truth". The insights of these individuals serve as stimuli to continue the general human search for the "ideal society". As activities occur toward the attainment of such mythically expressed goals, culture changes

and history is made. The social institutions in which the mythic visions become systematized and acted out constitute the empirical aspect of culture change which anthropologists analyse. What this thesis has clarified is that the social institutions themselves are not the most radical forces of change within society; rather it is the individual struggling within the social framework to achieve self-affirmation, by growing to understand what it is to be human. In short, the most fundamental force in culture is the optimism of the mythic vision of the "good society" created in the consciousness of individuals for translation into concrete social reality through the use of social mechanisms.

In terms of utilizing this thesis for field research, it will be necessary to consider the application of each of the disparate categories set forth in the diagram on page 11. The first category, labelled "Mythic Superstructure" contains both the problematic legacy of culture history as well as visions for the future. In order to set forth the contents of the mythic superstructure, in central Alberta for example, one can turn to the early biographical writings of the first settlers. Contained in these works are statements concerning both that which is to be incorporated in the struggle to extend

meaningfully in the creation of the "good society". The ontological development can then be traced through historical records which contain information concerning change within the social system stimulated by both internal demands and external demands made by those groups who constitute the conceptual category of "enemy".

The analysis of the categories themselves, represented in the diagram by the designations "philosophy, religion, politics, art and science" can be examined by reference to the historical development of the organizations which focus concern on any one of these categories. Two disparate concerns must then be considered. First, it will be necessary to examine the activities of the social group's members towards or within these sub-systems as they struggle to achieve the "good society". Remembering that the ideologies of each sub-system represent a specialized and highly crystallized statement of the mythic vision, shifting and numerical membership can be analysed as a measure of the degree to which any one of these social institutions communicates meaningfully with the constituent population and conveys a feasible programme for achieving that population's vision for the future. Strong and active

membership could then be taken as an indication that the population's collective optimism is supported by an institution's ideology for human liberation.

Second, the nature of the interrelationships between the various categories represented by social sub-systems would be considered. In examining this second realm of concern, the model outlined by Milton Rokeach in The Open and Closed Mind would be useful. His model relates to the nature of open and closed systems within the social supersystem.[1] The open system has the following qualities: it exhibits minimal rejection of belief systems other than its own, it communicates will with those of other belief systems, it makes relatively little discrepancy in the degree of differentation between its own beliefs and those of other belief systems, and it does not demand strict adherence to all of its concepts by all of its membership. The open system thus exhibits the qualities one would expect a system to display if it is in a high degree of consonance with the supersystem. The open sub-systems are, therefore, likely to represent the desires of the largest portion or "majority" of the constituent population. And because there is a certain

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1. For Rokeach's complete model, refer to the appendix of this thesis contained on pages 117 and 118.

security in numbers, its members perceive a minimal need for clearly defined "enemy" groups. These systems also indicate a very minimal perceived need for liberation from the supersystem with which they are closely aligned. Closed systems, on the other hand, have a high degree of rejection of other belief systems, make clear distinctions between their own beliefs and those of others, have rigid categories for internal and external belief systems, and demand strict adherence to the internal belief system on the part of its membership. Closed systems, therefore, tend to be of an insular nature which indicates their relatively insecure positions in relation to the more generally accepted supersystem or mythic paradigm. Yet each of these closed systems is a representation of a highly specialized interpretation of at least some aspect of the supermyth. However, the degree of rejection of the extant mythic superstructure is high enough that it appears to be opposed entirely to it. This is most clearly exhibited in that the highly closed systems, such as those of the fundamentalist religions, are future oriented to such an extent that they sympathize with very few of the extant values and norms of the supermyth. Their inability to communicate adequately the nature of their own vision

to a broader corpus of the population is exhibited in the violent quality of their "jargonese" as one might anticipate from May's work. One of the most interesting aspects of such closed systems lies in their inception, the point at which they make their need for "liberation" from the superstructure evident. Often these individuals "need" to escape from a social system because they are unable to share in the perceived benefits offered in the supermyth which orders that society and establishes its goals. This aspect is clearly exhibited in a wide range of religious phenomena from the Cargo cults of distant societies to the rash of fundamentalist religions in North America which acquire most of their membership from the "socially disadvantaged" groups. This also explains the futuristic quality of such closed systems: they cannot share adequately in the current system the benefits of that system so they aspire to an entirely different type of system in the future.

By examining such closed systems one can come to understand more clearly the mythic superstructure of a society, its limitations in answering both the individual and social problems involved in the extension of being, and the nature of the myth-forming process

itself as individuals struggle to create for themselves a meaning in life and a society in which they can live humanly in accordance with that meaning.

APPENDIX

THE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF OPEN-CLOSED SYSTEMS

A Belief-Disbelief System Is

Open	Closed
A. to the extent that, with respect to its organization along belief-disbelief continuum,	
1. the magnitude of rejection of disbelief subsystems is relatively low at each point along the continuum;	1. the magnitude of rejection of disbelief subsystems is relatively high at each point along the disbelief continuum;
2. there is communication of parts within and between belief and disbelief systems;	2. there is isolation of parts within and between belief and disbelief systems;
3. there is relatively little discrepancy in the degree of differentiation between belief and disbelief systems;	3. there is relatively great discrepancy in the degree of differentiation between belief and disbelief systems;
4. there is relatively high differentiation within the disbelief system;	4. there is relatively little differentiation within the disbelief system;
B. to the extent that, with respect to the organization along the central-peripheral dimension,	
1. the specific content of primitive beliefs (central region) is to the effect that the world one lives in, or the situation one is in at a particular moment, is a friendly one;	1. the specific content of primitive beliefs (central region) is to the effect that the world one lives in, or the situation one is in at a particular moment, is a threatening one;
2. the formal content of beliefs about authority and about people who hold to systems of authority (intermediate region) is to the effect that authority is not absolute and that people are	2. the formal content of beliefs about authority and about people who hold to systems of authority (intermediate region) is to the effect that authority is absolute and that people are

not to be evaluated (if they are to be evaluated at all) according to their agreement or disagreement with such authority;	to be accepted and rejected according to their agreement or disagreement with such authority;
3. the structure of beliefs and disbeliefs perceived to emanate from authority (peripheral region) is such that its substructures are in relative communication with each other; and finally,	3. the structure of beliefs and disbeliefs perceived to emanate from authority (peripheral region) is such that its substructures are in relative isolation with each other; and finally,
C. to the extent that, with respect to the time-perspective dimension, there is a	
1. relatively broad time perspective.	1. relatively narrow, future-oriented time perspective

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This chart is from Milton Rokeach, The Open and Closed Mind, 1960: 55-56.

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